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Authority and Influence in Lady Mary Wroth's  
*Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English and Comparative Literary Studies

University of Warwick, Department of English and Comparative Literary  
Studies

February 2020

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## Declaration

This thesis is submitted to the University of Warwick in support of my application for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. It has been composed by myself and has not been submitted in any previous application for any degree.

The work presented (including data generated and data analysis) was carried out by the author.

No part of this thesis has been published by the author.

## Abstract

This thesis explores why and how Lady Mary Wroth interacts with literary authorities and influences in her sonnet sequence, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (printed in 1621). It argues that Wroth alludes to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* in order to present herself as an heir and continuer of Sidney's poetic and political legacy, and as an authority in her own right. Alongside these authorities, it also considers contemporary influences on Wroth's work, such as the Neo-stoic writings of Justus Lipsius, and the poetry of Wroth's cousin and lover, William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke.

In her engagement with literary authorities, Wroth employs a strategy of heuristic imitation to establish both her erudition and her originality. Her work sets out to draw attention to her thorough knowledge of her source material, but then diverges from it in order to demonstrate her original contribution. Wroth draws upon the theme of the constant soul in the changing body that runs throughout Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to create a narrative of continuity between her poetic voice and that of her uncle, Philip Sidney.

In order to situate Wroth's work in its political context, this thesis explores the influence of contemporary Neo-stoic discourses on Wroth's work by identifying imagery shared by Wroth's sonnet sequence, Fulke Greville's *A Letter to an Honourable Lady*, and Justus Lipsius' *On Constancy*. The thesis follows and extends the work of scholars such as William Kennedy, Rosalind Smith, Christopher Warley, and Madeline Bassnett by arguing that Wroth's work should be read as part of a discussion of contemporary politics.

## Introduction

### 0.1 Thesis Summary

This thesis will argue that Wroth's allusions to literary authorities (Ovid and Sidney) in the 1621 printed version of the sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* work to establish her own literary voice as an authority, and that she uses this authority to promote her family's Protestant, militant, interventionist politics. It will also identify the influence on Wroth's work of contemporary discourses associated with this same political cause, and it draws comparisons between Wroth's writings and those of contemporaries and near contemporaries, Mary Sidney, Fulke Greville, and Justus Lipsius. Throughout, I use the term 'authority' in several connected senses. The term authority denotes a text which a poet intentionally draws upon, alludes to, or imitates. These texts also carry another meaning of the word authority because they are vessels, or represent persons, of acknowledged and established moral, intellectual, or political importance. By drawing on these authorities, Wroth seeks to establish her own type of authority – that is, an authorial voice that has influence upon the opinions of others. Wroth's careful demonstrations of her knowledge of classical literature, her Latinity, and her connection with Sidney demonstrate both the erudition and family connections which – as Wroth presents it – legitimise her right to this position of authority.

I will argue throughout that Wroth's allusions are a species of 'heuristic imitation', designed to identify her source texts clearly, while diverging from them in ways that significantly transform their meaning, thus

designating her work as an authority in its own right. My use of the term ‘heuristic imitation’ is taken from Thomas Greene’s *The Light in Troy*:

Heuristic imitations come to us advertising their derivation from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to distance themselves from the subtexts and force us to recognise the poetic distance traversed.<sup>1</sup>

Through the use of this type of imitation, Wroth advertises her thorough knowledge of, and connection with, the authorities upon which she draws, before making clear departures from her source material.<sup>2</sup> I use the term ‘influence’ in this thesis to refer to contemporary ideas and discourses which have affected Wroth’s work. ‘Influence’, with its passive connotations, might be a contentious word to use in relation to the writing of early modern women, some of whom authorised their writing by suggesting that another voice is flowing through them. This is not a method adopted by Wroth – although it is one with which she engages – and when I speak of ‘influence’ I do not intend to evoke this method of authorization.

In Chapter 1, ‘Women and Authority’, I will contextualise Wroth’s writing in the gender politics of early modern England. I argue that Wroth’s treatment of the female voice and female education in the printed section of *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* lays out an argument designed to authorise female speech and learning. The argument for the value of the

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> For further discussion of Wroth’s use of heuristic imitation, see Chapter 2.



female voice in the romance sets the scene for the female-voiced sonnet sequence that follows it. I will go on to examine the sonnet sequence in Chapters 2-6 of this thesis. In her presentation of Pamphilia, Nereana, and Lucenia (all characters in *Urania*), Wroth confronts the contemporary notion that women's speech and writing were a usurpation of the masculine, and that such licence was linked to other improper behaviours. Indeed, in one of the most well-known contemporary responses to Wroth's work she is accused of being a promiscuous drunk and an hermaphrodite. Chapter 1 will consider Wroth's response to this attack, and argue that Wroth does not refute the idea that the woman author was, in some sense, an hermaphrodite; but instead it draws upon other contemporary discourses to suggest that a combination of the masculine and feminine qualities in women produces the highest virtue. This chapter will also briefly examine Wroth's decision to print her work, and it places this decision in the context of contemporary manuscript and print culture. I suggest that Wroth's decision to print is evidence of the political nature of her text. Indeed, when placed within the gender politics of the early modern period, Wroth's decision to print is made all the more striking because the 'stigma' attached to print was much greater for women.

In Chapter 2, 'Imitation, Sidney, and Ovid', I will argue that the way in which Wroth interacts with authorities can be described using Robert Greene's term 'heuristic imitation'. I argue that Greene's model can be likened to Sidney's description of how to interact with classical authorities in his *Defence of Poesy*. I then go on to demonstrate Wroth's use of heuristic imitation in her allusions to two authorities: Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This chapter focuses particularly on

Wroth's allusions to the figure of Echo, who, in the early modern receptions of Ovid's tale, often represents empty babble, thoughtless repetition, and bad translation. Wroth repeatedly contrasts her speaker to the figure of Echo through the same method of heuristic imitation and through this literary allusion asserts the thoughtfulness of her repetitions, and the authority of her voice in its own right. This thesis does not attempt a reading of *Astrophil and Stella* or a full analysis of Wroth's debt to Sidney, but seeks to use examples of Wroth's engagement with Sidney as an authority to elucidate her method of imitation and self-fashioning.<sup>3</sup>

The following two chapters (Chapter 3, 'Complaint and Exemplarity', and Chapter 4, 'Change and Renewal') also place Wroth's sonnet sequence alongside the text of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and they continue to demonstrate Wroth's engagement with the Latin text and her use of heuristic imitation. I continue to argue that this method presents Pamphilia as a voice of authority and as an exemplar. This argument is at odds with scholarship that argues that Pamphilia is presented as a fallen woman, and that Wroth's sonnet sequence is a form of complaint poetry. In order to confront this conflict Chapter 3, 'Complaint and Exemplarity', argues that although Wroth engages with the female-voiced complaint genre, the figure of the complainant is one from which she carefully disassociates her speaker. However, the chapter concludes that there is a great deal of overlap between the characteristics of the exemplar in early modern literature and that of the complaining woman. Exemplary figures were complicated and often also

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<sup>3</sup> For Wroth's engagement with Sidney's sonnet sequence, see Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586–1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 283–331.

displayed moral flaws. The fallen woman in female-voiced complaint poetry often combines exemplary characteristics even while she provides a moral cautionary tale.

Chapter 4, 'Change and Renewal', argues that Wroth's sustained engagement with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is designed to present her poetic voice as a continuation of Philip Sidney's poetic voice, and thereby to support her own authority. Wroth draws on Ovid's presentation of the constant mind or soul within an ever-changing physical body in *Metamorphoses* as a blueprint to represent Pamphilia as a constant centre in the midst of cyclical change. I argue that, through this Ovidian image, Wroth presents herself as the continued presence of her uncle's political voice in a changed world. This argument implies that the poet's voice is heritable in the way that, in the theory of the king's two bodies, the monarchical body politic is eternal and continued in the body natural of the successor. I argue that Wroth's presentation of change is also influenced by Spenser's formulation of change in the Mutability Cantos of *The Faerie Queene*. The excavation of this influence, with its connotations of Elizabethan nostalgia, leads on to the final two chapters, which consider the ways in which contemporary politics and political discourse influenced Wroth's sonnet sequence.

In Chapter 5, 'Neo-stoic Constancy', I place Wroth's sonnet sequence alongside Fulke Greville's *Letter to an Honourable Lady* and Justus Lipsius' *On Constancy* and draw parallels between the texts. In this way, I argue that Wroth's work reflects similar concerns and influences to those of Greville, whose work draws substantially on the Neo-stoic discourses popularised in the work of Lipsius. I do not argue that Wroth draws directly upon these texts as authorities but instead suggest the similarities between them are evidence

of Wroth's engagement in Neo-stoic discourse. This chapter returns to the theme of exemplarity by arguing that Pamphilia is presented as an exemplar of the Protestant, Neo-stoic struggle for constancy. I situate Pamphilia's exemplarity in relation to contemporary discussions of female heroism.

Chapter 6: 'Pembroke, Politics and Coterie Poetry', situates Wroth's sonnet sequence in the political context of its publication in 1621. I will argue that the themes shared by the work of Wroth and Pembroke are indicative of a mutual engagement in coterie activity and of their shared political agenda to promote an interventionist, Protestant political policy. I take this opportunity to engage with scholarship that argues that the poetry of Wroth and Pembroke should be read as a dialogue concerning their romantic relationship. I argue that the question of whether or not the poems represent an erotic dialogue in their manuscript form is not relevant to a reading of the 1621, printed sequence. The differences between the print and manuscript versions of the poems, created by both context and textual variation, are evidence of an active process of repurposing the texts, and I will argue that the manuscript and print versions should therefore be analysed independently.

## 0.2 The Text

Wroth's extant *oeuvre* not only consists of the 1621 printed romance *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, and its appended sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, but also includes several other manuscript works. The manuscript version of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (preserved in the Folger collection) features significant differences from its print

counterpart and includes poems not in the printed edition. Wroth produced a manuscript continuation of *Urania* and – also in manuscript – a play: *Love's Victory*.<sup>4</sup> As stated above, this thesis is primarily concerned with the printed version of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* published in 1621. I have chosen to concentrate on the printed version of the sequence because Wroth's decision to present and circulate the work through the medium of print has a bearing on the interpretation of the text as political, as I will discuss in the first chapter of this thesis.<sup>5</sup> Since the print edition presents the romance in tandem with the sonnet sequence, presenting the Pamphilia of the romance as the author or speaker of the sonnets, I also draw on moments from the printed half of the *Urania* to support my argument.

The text of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* that I use in this thesis comes from Ilona Bell's 2017 edition, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*.<sup>6</sup> The great strength of this edition is that it presents the manuscript and print versions of the sonnet sequence as separate entities, while highlighting the textual differences between them. Previous, influential editions have conflated the two texts or presented one and not the other. For example Roberts' edition used the order of the print sequence, but the spelling and grammar of the Folger manuscript, apparently in the belief that the print edition was the final version, but the grammar and spelling were

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<sup>4</sup> Currently there is only one unabridged modern edition of both parts of Wroth's romance, and I will cite the following editions: *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. by Josephine Roberts (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995); *The Second Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. by Josephine Roberts, Susanne Gossett, Janel Mueller (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1999). The edition of Wroth's play I use is *Lady Mary Wroth's Love's Victory: The Penshurst Manuscript*, ed. by Michael G. Brennan (London: Roxburghe Club, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> For print as an important medium for Spenserian poets, see Michelle O'Callaghan, *The 'Shepherd's Nation': Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612-25* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 3-9, 18-19.

<sup>6</sup> *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017)

more genuinely Wroth's own.<sup>7</sup> Other editions have simply ignored the manuscript version of the text as an earlier prototype of the sequence.<sup>8</sup> As both Margaret Ezell and Henry Woudhuysen have argued, the idea that print was the final goal for writers, or even the final stage of a creative process, is an anachronistic and flawed one.<sup>9</sup> Rather than treating the Folger manuscript as an imperfect forerunner of the print text, Paul Salzman's revolutionary online edition combats this falsely perceived hierarchy of texts by allowing the reader to view the different textual stages – including the editorial process of modernisation – of the sonnet sequence in parallel. Salzman's work enables the reader to see the differences between sonnets side by side.<sup>10</sup> Bell's edition of Wroth's poetry follows Salzman's in presenting the manuscript and print versions of the sequence as separate pieces of work. The advantage of Bell's edition is that both sequences are printed in their own order. Salzman's online edition features numbering that explains the order of the print sequence, but in order to create parallel texts, all poems are arranged according to the order of the manuscript sequence. Bell's edition of the printed text also helpfully provides both the numbering as it appears in the 1621 printing, and the (overall) number in the sequence for reference (i.e.

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<sup>7</sup> *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. by Josephine A. Roberts (London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983).

<sup>8</sup> *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, ed. by Gary Waller (Salzburg: University of Salzburg Press, 1977); *Poems: A Modernised Edition*, ed. by R.E. Pritchard (Keele University Press, 1996); an easy to read modernised version of the print sequence appears in an anthology of women's writing, *Women Poets of the Renaissance*, ed. by Marion Wynne Davies (London: J. M. Dent, 1998), pp. 183-228. Poems from the Folger manuscript have appeared in print. A small selection, designed to highlight the careful structure of the Folger manuscript is included in *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Poetry*, ed. by Jill Seal Millman and Gillian Wright (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 35-56.

<sup>9</sup> Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 57; H.R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 22. For a discussion of print and manuscript culture and women's relationship to these, see Chapter 1 of this thesis.

<sup>10</sup> *Mary Wroth's Poetry: An Electronic Edition* (online: <http://wroth.latrobe.edu.au>, 2012).

P1, P2, P3, etc in the manner employed in Roberts' edition), thereby creating an edition that does not obfuscate any groupings intended by Wroth (as many previous editions do) but one that is also easy to use.<sup>11</sup> I will make use of these overall reference numbers (P1, P2, etc) throughout the thesis.

While previous editions have privileged the printed text of the sequence, Bell's edition has leaned towards favouring the manuscript version. The printed text is thus demoted to a 'bowdlerized' version of the manuscript text.<sup>12</sup> This thesis will argue that the print version of the sequence represents a repurposed text rather than a revision, and that it should be seen as a separate entity rather than an adaptation of the Folger manuscript.<sup>13</sup> It will argue that rather than a censored version of an older sequence, Wroth presents a newly arranged and redrafted sequence designed to deliver a political message. This thesis, therefore, foregrounds the printed text as it appeared in 1621.<sup>14</sup> It is for this reason that I am ambivalent about Bell's decision to incorporate the handwritten corrections from the so-called Kohler copy.<sup>15</sup> These substitutions suggest that the text was altered to correct the 1621 edition with view to reprinting it. This is a valid argument as it was common practice for poets to use a printed text as a sort of fair copy for

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<sup>11</sup> The groupings of sonnets in the Folger manuscript are discussed in Margaret P. Hannay, 'The "Ending End" of Lady Mary Wroth's Manuscript Poems', *Sidney Journal*, 31 (2013), pp. 1-22.

<sup>12</sup> Ilona Bell, "Introduction", *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), p. 51.

<sup>13</sup> Woudhuysen discusses Sidney's repurposing of his poetry between versions of *Arcadia*, p. 271.

<sup>14</sup> Madeline Bassnett has argued that the changes to the sequence are designed to highlight its political nature, rather than to disguise an erotic one: 'The Politics of Election in Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51 (2011), p. 126.

<sup>15</sup> Bell, "Introduction", p. 69. The 'Kohler copy' is a copy of the 1621 *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* which is uniquely interesting because it contains the author's own handwritten corrections.

corrections.<sup>16</sup> However, this is only one possibility. The corrections might have been made at another time entirely, years after, to present the text to a different audience and for a different purpose.

I will focus my argument on classical authorities in Wroth's work on allusions to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. I have made this decision due to the clarity of Wroth's allusions to the work and the accessibility of the text. Firstly, Wroth's allusions to *Metamorphoses* are sometimes signposted by the use of names from that text, whereas other texts alluded to are not highlighted in the same way. This signposting of allusions invites an intertextual reading. Secondly, *Metamorphoses* was a popular text in the early modern period and was accessible both as a material object, and in ease of reading. Golding's popular translation meant that the work could be read in English and it was widely enjoyed by women as well as men. At the same time, the work was considered easy Latin, and it was – as it is to this day – a popular school text.<sup>17</sup> The existence of Golding's popular translation allows for a comparison between Wroth's treatment of Ovid's stories and that in Golding's translation and the Latin.<sup>18</sup> I will use the Loeb Classical Library for all references to the Latin text of *Metamorphoses*. This edition is attractive because it provides a clear text and a literal translation that can be compared to Golding's rendering. Naturally there are differences between the spellings of seventeenth-century Latin and the first-century Latin that appears in the Loeb Classical Library. However, since Wroth was writing in English and not

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<sup>16</sup> Woudhuysen, p. 23.

<sup>17</sup> For *Metamorphoses* as a school text, see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), pp. 19-23; for female readership, see Liz Oakley-Brown, *Ovid and the Cultural Politics of Translation in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2006), pp. 123-64.

<sup>18</sup> The first instalment of George Sandys' translation of *Metamorphoses* appeared in 1621, *The first Five Bookes of Ovids Metamorphosis* (London: Imprinted for W.B., 1621).



in Latin, these variations in spelling are not significant enough to outweigh the ease of reference afforded by the Loeb text.

### 0.3 Methodology

In my analysis of Wroth's poetry I will compare her work with the authorities upon which she draws through a series of close readings. Each chapter will concentrate on a different aspect of Wroth's fashioning of her poetic voice as an authority. I will employ Thomas Greene's theory of Renaissance imitation, as described in his book *The Light in Troy*, which provides a clear vocabulary for describing the complicated and self-aware relationship with imitation that Wroth and her contemporaries enjoyed.<sup>19</sup> I will compare Wroth's sonnets which allude to stories from *Metamorphoses* to the text of Ovid's Latin and to Golding's translation. I will identify moments in which Wroth's poetry suggests an engagement with the Latin text rather than with Golding's rendering, or with the themes of the story more generally. I will then examine the effect this intertextuality has on the meaning of the sonnet through a close reading. I have adopted this method of examining intertextuality from Jonathan Bate's book *Shakespeare and Ovid*.<sup>20</sup> Bate uses this method to demonstrate Shakespeare's Latinity and the pervasive influence of Ovid's work on Shakespeare's drama. I will deploy the same method to demonstrate Wroth's careful performance of her own Latinity – designed to promote the authority of her poetic voice – and to elucidate meanings in the poems that would be recognisable to a contemporary audience well-versed in Ovid's

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (London: Yale University Press, 1982).

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993).

work. Throughout the thesis I will take an historicist approach as I will seek to contextualise my readings in relation to contemporary knowledge and events.

#### 0.4 Existing Scholarship

Christopher Warley argues that Pamphilia's assertion of constancy is an assertion of Wroth's nobility and social privilege. He proposes that Wroth presents Pamphilia as a new Astrophil, and that the sequence represents her claim to an aristocratic right to speech.<sup>21</sup> Warley's argument follows William Kennedy, who argues that Wroth's romance and sonnet sequence together present 'the nobility as guardians of the nation's interests against those of a potentially powerful and authoritarian monarch.'<sup>22</sup> Rosalind Smith, too, reads Wroth's sonnet sequence as a statement of Elizabethan nostalgia:

Rather than an expression of a private rejection of the courtly life in general, a withdrawal into interiority within the bounds of a genre

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<sup>21</sup> Christopher Warley, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 177-179. Warley's argument is an important counterpoint to the work of Gary Waller, who has argued – through a psychoanalytic methodology – that Wroth's poetry bears the 'kleptomaniac' characteristics of a woman usurping masculine rights (Gary Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert, and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), p. 203); Naomi Miller – also combining a psychoanalytic and historicist approach – has persuasively argued against Waller's notion that Wroth saw herself as usurping the masculine by mapping out a tradition of female writers and suggesting that Wroth's poetry is an exercise in the creation of a female subjectivity independent of the masculine (Naomi Miller, *Changing the Subject: Mary Wroth and Figurations of Gender in Early Modern England* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), p. 12.) Warley's work makes the important point that in her self-presentation Wroth emphasises her family connections.

<sup>22</sup> William Kennedy, *The Site of Petrarchism: Early Modern National Sentiment in Italy, France, and England* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 171.

specifically coded to another period implies a pointed and public rejection of the present court in favour of that period.<sup>23</sup>

Smith argues that Wroth's efforts to situate her poetry in the Sidneian tradition and to recall the Elizabethan period (through the outdated genre of the piece) connect her work to that of radical Spenserian poets and their Protestant agenda. Wroth's work is read as part of a movement of Protestant activism, opposing James I's non-interventionist foreign policy, and urging military support of his daughter, Elizabeth of Bohemia.<sup>24</sup> The work of Lyn Bennet supports these arguments as her work identifies Wroth's sonnets as consciously and adroitly rhetorically constructed. While other scholars have characterised Wroth's poetic persona as one of withdrawal and absence, Bennet contextualises her writing within contemporary rhetorical practices to argue that her work is structured as public display.<sup>25</sup> Madeline Bassnett's work examines the changes made between the manuscript and print versions of the sequence, and argues that these changes intensify the political

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<sup>23</sup> Rosalind Smith, *Sonnets and the English Woman Writer, 1560–1621* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 95–97. For Elizabethan nostalgia, see also Elaine V. Beilin, "Winning the Harts of the People", *Pilgrimage for Love: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honour of Josephine A. Roberts*, ed. by Sigrid King (Arizona Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 1–17. For Elizabeth on the Jacobean stage and as a 'focus for intense and unprecedented nostalgia' among militant Protestants, see Nicola Watson and Michael Dobson, *England's Elizabeth: An Afterlife in Fame and Fantasy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 43–78.

<sup>24</sup> Rosalind Smith, p. 99.

<sup>25</sup> Lyn Bennet, *Women Writing of Divinest Things: Rhetoric and the Poetry of Pembroke, Wroth and Lanyer* (Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2004), pp. 111–122. For withdrawal in Wroth's poetry, see Jeff Masten, "'Shall I turne blabb?': Circulation, Gender, and Subjectivity in Mary Wroth's Sonnets", *Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Naomi Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), pp. 67–87; and for the female subject as lacuna at the centre of Wroth's work, see Natasha Distiller, *Desire and Gender in the Sonnet Tradition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 80–97.

meaning of the poems by highlighting Calvinist language which was so closely associated with the political agenda of Wroth and her family.<sup>26</sup>

In reading Wroth's Petrarchan love poetry as the expression of political desire (rather than, or as well as, personal desire) Kennedy, Warley, Smith, and others follow an established tradition in early modern scholarship. Arthur Marotti argues that the love poetry that developed in the Elizabethan era was a vehicle for communicating political desire or frustration.<sup>27</sup> Love poetry – particularly Petrarchan sonnets – became a language through which political desires, petitions, or even strategies, could be expressed in an acceptable manner.<sup>28</sup> In Elizabeth's reign the role of the lover gave male courtiers an acceptable speaking position from which to approach their queen or to express their frustration. Love poetry, therefore,

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<sup>26</sup> Madeline Bassnett, "The Politics of Election in Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51, 1 (2011), pp. 111-134. Bassnett's work is preceded by Elaine Beilin's analysis of religious imagery in Wroth's sequence: Elaine Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Woman Writers of the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 211-234. In its published form, the sequence is presented as if it is the poetry of the Pamphilia who appears in the romance. Much scholarship on Wroth's *Urania* identifies overtly political themes in the text. The cast of royals and nobles who traverse continents to support the rightful claimants to usurped thrones has been interpreted by Josephine Roberts as an image of the sort of Protestant League to which the Sidney-Herbert faction thought James I ought to aspire: see Josephine Roberts, "Critical Introduction", *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. Josephine Roberts, pp. xv-cxx (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995), p. xlvii; see also Karen Britland, "Women in the Royal Courts", *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 124-140, 129; Julie Crawford, *Mediatix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 160-205. The many relationships depicted in the romance between women and their suitors and husbands have been read as a negotiation of the relationship between subjects and the monarch, which was an established mode of discourse in the period: see Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990); Melissa Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), pp. 117-144.

<sup>27</sup> Arthur Marotti, "'Love is Not Love': Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order", *ELH*, 49, 2 (1982), pp. 396-428.

<sup>28</sup> For an account of love poetry as a language of political dissatisfaction and of petition during the reigns of Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, and James I, see Distiller, pp. 43-79; for the emergence of the word 'courtship' with its two interconnected meanings of wooing and acting the courtier, see Catherine Bates, *The Rhetoric of Courtship in Elizabethan Language and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 6-44.

became a political dialogue that might accommodate both a male and a female voice; as Melissa Sanchez argues:

Erotic tropes like love and courtship allowed women writers to engage in public debate with their male peers, who were themselves using the language of desire to contemplate the nature of authority.<sup>29</sup>

Entry into public debate through the language of courtship was by no means an unproblematic option for early modern women, as I explore in Chapter 1. However, the convention of reading love and courtship as ciphers for the political meant that, as Margaret Hannay has argued, the reading public in 1621 were ‘primed’ to interpret Wroth’s work as political.<sup>30</sup>

Reading Wroth’s sonnets as an engagement in political debate is not the only way the sonnets have been interpreted. Many scholars have interpreted the sequence as an expression of Wroth’s own desires and the struggle to express them within the constraints of a masculine-coded genre. Naomi Miller’s work – with its combined historicist and Irigarayan psychoanalytic approach – has argued that Wroth’s work sought to carve out a specifically female subject position and to express specifically female desires.<sup>31</sup> The nature of the desires that are expressed in Wroth’s poetry has not been a point of critical consensus. Akiko Kusonoki reads the sequence as

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<sup>29</sup> Melissa E. Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), p. 234.

<sup>31</sup> Naomi Miller, *Changing the Subject: Mary Wroth and Figurations of Gender in Early Modern England* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996). See also Nona Fienberg, “Mary Wroth and the Invention of Female Poetic Subjectivity”, *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

an exploration of peculiarly female sadness directed towards constructing a sense of female self-hood; in contrast, Leila Watkins argues that the sequence is designed to provide community and consolation to a wide audience of male and female readers.<sup>32</sup> While Ann Rosalind Jones has interpreted the work as an assertion of constant love and a plea for requital, Susan Lauffer O'Hara argues that the sequence is an ironic rejection of constancy and an assertion of sadomasochistic desire.<sup>33</sup> Ilona Bell's work also concentrates on the expression of personal desire in Wroth's poetry, and has moved in the opposite direction from Marotti's argument in "Love is Not Love" by suggesting that more scholarship should be spent on interpreting early modern love poetry as part of an act of wooing.<sup>34</sup> In her work on Wroth's poetry, Bell, as I have described above, focusses on the manuscript poems; she identifies the sensuality of the poems, and she argues that they form part of a dialogue with the poetry of William Herbert.<sup>35</sup> Scholars like Bell, Bond,

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<sup>32</sup> Akiko Kusonoki, "'Sorrow I'll Wed': Resolutions of Women's Sadness in Mary Wroth's *Urania* and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*", *Sidney Journal*, 31, 1 (2013), pp. 117-130; Leila Watkins, "The Poetics of Consolation and Community in Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Studies in Philology*, 112, 1 (2015), pp. 139-161.

<sup>33</sup> Ann Rosalind Jones has argued that the sonnets are a narrative of Wroth's painful love story in which Pamphilia 'turns the humiliating position of an abandoned woman into proof of her heroic constancy.' Jones argues that the sonnets were published by Wroth in an effort to win her lover back: Ann Rosalind Jones, *The Currency of Eros: Women's Love Lyric in Europe, 1540-1620* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), p. 141. For a reading of the sequence as a rejection of constancy, see Susan Lauffer O'Hara, *The Theatricality of Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011); for the sequence as an expression of aggression and desire in a 'punk rock' form, see Paul Hecht, "Distortion, Aggression, and Sex in Mary Wroth's Sonnets", *Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900*, 53, 1 (2013), pp. 91-115.

<sup>34</sup> Ilona Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 1-14.

<sup>35</sup> For Bell's work on the sensual nature of Wroth's manuscript poetry, see Ilona Bell, "'Joy's Sports': The Unexpurgated Text of Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Modern Philology*, 111, 2 (2013), pp. 231-252; Bell, "'A Too Curious Secrecie': Wroth's Pastoral Song and *Urania*", *Sidney Journal*, 31, 1 (2013), pp. 23-50; Bell, "The Autograph Manuscript of Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine Larson and Naomi Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 171-82. For the poems of Wroth and her cousin William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke as an erotic dialogue, see Garth Bond, "Amphilanthus to Pamphilia: William Herbert, Mary Wroth and Penshurst Mount", *Sidney Journal*, 31:1, (2013), pp. 51-80; Mary Ellen Lamb, "The Poetry of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke", *The Ashgate Research Companion to the*

and Lamb produce biographical readings of Wroth's work, informed by Margaret Hannay's thorough biographical research.<sup>36</sup> Bell's work has been most important to the field in urging that the manuscript and printed sequences should be read as separate texts.

### 0.5 The Contribution of this Thesis

These two significant scholarly traditions in the study of Wroth's poetry – the biographical and the political – are interlinked and by no means mutually exclusive. The political readings often draw on biographical detail: for example, Pamphilia's constancy can only represent the worth of the nobility – as it does in Warley's reading (described above) – if Pamphilia is associated with her creator, that is, a woman embedded in the English aristocracy. The poems may have had one purpose and meaning whilst they circulated in manuscript and then were subsequently given a new one when they were rewritten, reordered and presented in the entirely different context of the 1621 print edition. Therefore, while I situate this thesis in the first body of scholarship described here, it is not necessary to refute or disallow the second. This thesis will build on the arguments of Kennedy, Warley, and Smith by examining the ways in which Wroth used intertextuality with Ovid and Sidney to characterise Pamphilia as an exemplar of constancy, and

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*Sidneys, 1500-1700, Vol. 2*, ed. by Margaret P. Hannay, Michael G. Brennan and Mary Ellen Lamb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 269-279; Lamb, "'Can You Suspect a Change in Me?': Poems by Mary Wroth and William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson and Naomi J. Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 53-68; Ilona Bell, "'Sugared Sonnets Among Their Private Friends': Mary Wroth and William Shakespeare", *Mary Wroth and Shakespeare*, ed. by Paul Salzman and Marion Wynne-Davies (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 9-24.

<sup>36</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), and Hannay, "Sleuthing the Archives: The Life of Mary Wroth", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson, Naomi J. Miller and Andrew Strycharski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 19-33.

thereby enter into contemporary political debate on intervention in the Low Countries and the role of the aristocracy in governance. This thesis will add to the work already done by Smith in examining the influences of Neo-stoic discourse on Wroth's work and her very political representation of the virtue of constancy. My significant contribution here will be my extended analysis of Wroth's interaction with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. While some scholars have commented on Wroth's Ovidian references, most consider them as allusions to a story or character from the epic, rather than identifying textual allusions. None so far have conducted a sustained examination of Wroth's engagement with the Latin text.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Scholars who have identified Ovidian allusions in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* include Robin Farabaugh, "Ariadne, Venus, and the Labyrinth: Classical Sources and the Thread of Instruction in Mary Wroth's works", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 96, 2 (1997); Mary B. Moore, "The Labyrinth as Style in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Studies in English Literature*, 38, 1 (1998), pp. 109-125; Jami Ake, "Mary Wroth's Willow Poetics", *Crossing Boundaries: Issues of Cultural and Individual Identities in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Sally McKee (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 127-151; Susan Lauffer O'Hara, *The Theatricality of Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011); Clare R. Kinney, "Turn and Counterturn: Reappraising Mary Wroth's Poetic Labyrinths", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson, Naomi J. Miller, and Andrew Strycharski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 85-102. For Ovidian allusions in *Love's Victory*, see Joyce Green Macdonald, "Ovid and Women's Pastoral in Lady Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51, 2 (2011), pp. 447-463. For Ovidian allusions in *Urania*, see Clare R. Kinney, "Mary Wroth Romances Ovid", *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing, Part III: The Early Stuart Period (1603-1642)*, ed. by Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 241-256. For Wroth's interaction with Ovid and Sappho, see Line Cottegnies, "The Sapphic Context of Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, ed. by Susan Wiseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 60-76. For Wroth's interactions with the poetry of Catullus, see Christopher J. Warner, "Talking Back to Catullus: Lady Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* 13", *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 23 (1997), pp. 95-110.



# 1. Women and Authority

## 1.1 Introduction

In *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* Wroth's speaker asserts the superiority of her self-expression and simple style to the ornamental and overblown work of other poets. In sonnet P45, the speaker contrasts herself to, 'those pleasant wits' who revel in their own 'fram'd words,' as she cannot. For Pamphilia, these constructions are 'the drosse / Of purer thoughts'. She continues in denigration of those who do not conform to her own sparse style: 'Alas, thinke I, your plenty shewes your want; / For where most feeling is, wordes are more scant'.<sup>1</sup> Words are indeed comparatively scant in Wroth's deceptively simple poetry, and, just as Jonson made a virtue out of the simplicity of Penshurst, so Wroth implies the spare architecture of her poetry is reflective of 'purer thoughts' than those of her peers. Wroth tells us that the Pamphilia of the sonnets has a voice that communicates something of worth and of genuine feeling, rather than ornamental artifice. In this pose of authenticity, Wroth establishes Pamphilia as an authoritative speaking voice.<sup>2</sup> In this thesis I will often explore the ways in which Wroth presents Pamphilia as a moral, political, and literary authority. First, it is important to explore the complicated and tenuous nature of that authority in a society that was suspicious of female speech. Wroth presented her Petrarchan sonnet sequence in print and in the voice of a woman, and her choices of genre,

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), P45, pp. 231-232.

<sup>2</sup> For the importance of 'genuine' emotion in provoking imitation in others, see Jacqueline Miller, "The Passion Signified: Imitation and the Construction of Emotions in Sidney and Wroth", *Criticism*, 43, 4 (2001), pp. 407-21.

publication, and voice, all present puzzles for scholars of her work. This chapter will contextualise Wroth's sonnet sequence in the gender politics, and the manuscript and print culture of her day. I will outline the ambivalent attitude to women's speech during the early seventeenth century. I will argue that Wroth sought to authorise her voice by demonstrating her learning and consider the problems with this strategy. I will argue that Wroth positioned herself, through Pamphilia, as a sort of hermaphrodite voice through her choice of imitative models. In this chapter I will make reference to Wroth's characterisation of women's authority in the printed *Urania*, as it is in the romance that Wroth develops the character of Pamphilia who is presented as the designated speaker-author of the sonnets.

## 1.2 Women's Authority

This section will consider the ambivalent attitude to women's voices in the early modern period. Throughout the *Urania*, Wroth's narrative voice praises the writing and intellectual achievements of women. The sonnet sequence itself dramatises only the female voice, not allowing the male figure, Amphilanthus, a reply. However, Wroth's own work draws attention to a cultural ambivalence towards female authority from the very start of the romance in which she dramatises the denigration of the female voice common in the early modern period. In the opening scene of the romance, Urania the shepherdess comes across a love-sick knight, Perissus, wasting away from love and grief in a cave. Urania, who is a rather sensible and moderate character, gives Perissus some practical advice. He replies in anger, 'what divelish spirit art thou, that thus dost come to torture me? But now I

see you are a woman; and therefore not much to be marked'.<sup>3</sup> In this exchange Perissus suggests Urania is a 'furie' as well as a 'divelish spirit', reflecting contemporary discourses that not only dismissed the value of female speech, but also presented it as dangerous, monstrous, and morally destructive. Urania's advice to the young man turns out to be very good, and his story turns out well because he took it. Wroth directly satirises, and in this way challenges, contemporary attitudes to women in this episode, right at the start of her printed romance. Urania is the first of many women in the romance who give good counsel. Gender politics in early Jacobean England encompassed both Wroth's view of the value of women's speech, and the more misogynistic point of view represented in Perissus' response to Urania.

Despite the multivalent nature of the debate on women's education, Perissus' suggestion, from the opening of Wroth's romance, that as a woman Urania is not to be marked, reflects the legal and notional status of women in early modern England. Women were judged to be under their husband's care, to be instructed and moulded by his better judgement.<sup>4</sup> In practical ways women were treated like children, or rather children were treated like women: before the age of seven all children were cared for by female caregivers or servants, all were dressed alike in dresses, and, whilst in this female sphere, were taught to read and write by their female caregivers using

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<sup>3</sup> Mary Wroth, *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts (Binghampton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), p. 4. Where I reference Wroth's *Urania* I will also provide page numbers for a facsimile edition of Wroth's publication, *The Early Modern Englishwoman: Mary Wroth*, Part 1, Volume 10 (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> The Elizabethan marriage homily asserts that one of the needs for marriage is that woman needs man's guidance for 'woman is a weak creature, not endued with like strength and constancy of mind': Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 13. "Homily on Matrimony", *The English Renaissance Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. Kate Aughterson (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 434-39.

a hornbook.<sup>5</sup> For many women, if they were literate at all, this was where their education might reach its zenith. At seven, young boys would graduate into the masculine sphere. They would be breeched (that is, begin to wear breeches rather than skirts) and move into the care of male tutors and servants. From reading, few girls and more boys would progress to writing. Once literate, the sons of merchants, the gentility, and the aristocracy would learn rhetoric, Latin, and perhaps Greek, either at a grammar school or at home under private tutors. In this way, a boy's progression to Latin and further education was what differentiated him from women. These areas of study were considered unnecessary and unhelpful to women.<sup>6</sup> Some Humanist thinkers believed women capable of further education, but recognised its unsuitability for their lives. Danielle Clarke observes that in 'any period language is a powerful signifier of position, status, as well as the systems through which relationships of power are produced and maintained.'<sup>7</sup> The language deemed appropriate for men (rhetoric and the classics) equipped them for power, whereas the language considered safe for women did not. It was not only consideration for women's frailty that governed female education, but also for vocation. This view explains the vitriol with which some early modern thinkers reacted to educated women, because they saw it as a usurpation of the masculine and an encroachment upon the masculine right to wield power.

Alongside this supposed child-like weakness and lack of constancy, women's minds were imagined to be vulnerable in expressly sexual terms.

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<sup>5</sup> Charlton, pp. 11, 78.

<sup>6</sup> Danielle Clarke, *The Politics of Early Modern Women's Writing* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), pp. 19-20.

<sup>7</sup> Clarke, 2001, p. 18.

Women's education was designed to keep their 'wayward' nature in check, but not to go so far as to corrupt them with ideas they were not equipped to understand.<sup>8</sup> Women's uncontrolled speech was associated with women's uncontrolled sexuality. Obedience, silence, and chastity were contrasted to disobedience, speech, and promiscuity. As Jane Stevenson explains, despite Humanist ideas on the virtue and efficacy of women's education, 'folk wisdom continued to obstinately make a metonymic association between the open publicly uttering mouth and the opening of other female orifices which should remain closed.'<sup>9</sup> This metonymic link between the female mouth and female genitalia that persisted in popular discourse can be seen in Denny's verse libel of Wroth's writing that I will go on to examine later in this chapter. While the woman's open mouth was associated with a gaping vulva (as it is in Denny's libel), the tongue was often associated with the penis. Midwifery manuals advised that boys' umbilical cords should be tied off long, so that they would have long tongues and long members, whereas girls' cords should be cut off short.<sup>10</sup> In her apparent promiscuity, the speaking woman was also encroaching upon masculine territory by, in a sense, wielding a penis.

The idea that a woman speaking or writing made her promiscuous, and that an educated, speaking (or writing) woman usurped something masculine, is well encapsulated in the abusive verse libel Wroth received from Sir Edward Denny following the publication of her work in print in 1621. Denny believed that he had been depicted in the *Urania* as the violent father-in-law of a character called Sirelius. Towards the end of the romance,

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<sup>8</sup> Clarke, 2001, p. 21.

<sup>9</sup> Jane Stevenson, "Female Authority and Authorization Strategies in Early Modern Europe", *'This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 16-40, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Clarke, 2001, pp. 25-26.

this father, suspecting his own daughter of infidelity to her husband, tried to murder her. The father wishes to kill his daughter because he fears a taint to his ‘noble blood’.<sup>11</sup> In modern terms, he attempts an honour killing, but is prevented by his son-in-law. While Denny’s verse libel and letter claim to object to Wroth’s lies about him and his family affairs, his attack spends more time on the very act of writing. Denny begins ‘Hermaphrodite in show, in deed a monster’.<sup>12</sup> With the word ‘hermaphrodite’ Denny draws on the notion that the female author cannot be wholly female because she has taken on masculine attributes in choosing to write. The word ‘monster’ has similar implications in the early modern period, denoting not simply a hideous creature, but often specifically one made of mixed parts.<sup>13</sup> In both her reputation and in her actions, Denny argues, Wroth is an abomination, not quite one thing, nor another: a female usurping male attributes. The word was also used to describe hermaphroditic babies, or infants that were in some other way deformed (conjoined children or children with too many limbs), and Denny picks up with the theme of monstrous birth in the next couplet. ‘Thy wrathfull spite conceived an Idell book / brought forth a foole which like the damme doth look’. The book (the baby) and its author (mother) are both described as ‘fool[s]’, with ‘fool’ here suggesting a range of meanings from half-witted, to ‘vicious or impious’.<sup>14</sup> Using a metaphor of birth to describe literary production Denny echoes both the opening sonnet of Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella* and Wroth’s P85 and P78. This birth metaphor plays out

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<sup>11</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 516; Scholar Press facsimile p. 439.

<sup>12</sup> All quotations from Denny’s verse libel come from a transcription of Nottingham Clifton MSS, CL LM 85/3, “Hermaphrodite Poems”, *Mary Wroth’s Poetry: An Electronic Edition*, ed. by Paul Salzman (Melborne, La Trobe University, 2012), np.

<sup>13</sup> A monster is often two or more animals mixed together, “monster, n., adv., and adj.”, *OED Online*, June 2017, Web, 08 August 2017.

<sup>14</sup> “fool, n.1 and adj.” *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2017, Web, 10 August 2017.

differently for Sidney and his niece because Wroth's actual womb becomes entangled in the metaphor. Just as modern critics cannot help but link Wroth's child-bearing imagery to the biological processes of her womb, so Denny moves on to Wroth's sexual organs: 'Common oysters such as thine gaype wide / and take in pearles or worse in at every tide'.<sup>15</sup> Denny transforms the simile of a rare pearl in a common oyster, which Wroth had employed to satirise the character's high opinion of his own noble blood, selected, according to Denny, 'for want of witt', into a crude image of Wroth's ('thine') vulva yawning open to receive anything that wishes to enter. Wroth's writing is equated with promiscuity.

Denny's verse libel transforms Wroth's act of writing into a sexual act. It is, therefore, interesting that the story that Denny reads himself into is also one about a masculine imposition of the sexual onto a woman's writing. A 'fine gentleman' begins paying court to Sirelius's wife, and he, suspicious, refuses him access to the house. The wife 'more out of her spirit that disdaind to be curbd, than by extraordinary liking of him' writes the gentleman letters. This woman's writing is about asserting her independence, but it is not, as the tale's narrator assures us, evidence of promiscuous desires or intent. Her husband broke into 'her cabinets' and 'letters he found, but only such as between friends might passe in complement, yet they appeared to jealousie to be amorous.'<sup>16</sup> The husband reads his wife's independence, manifested in the act of writing, as evidence of infidelity. The woman's father then, taking his

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<sup>15</sup> Naomi Miller discusses birth imagery in Wroth's work: Naomi Miller, *Changing the Subject: Mary Wroth and Figurations of Gender in Early Modern England* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), p. 85, and Nona Fienberg, "Mary Wroth and the Invention of Female Poetic Subjectivity", *Reading Mary Wroth: Representing Alternatives in Early Modern England*, ed. by Naomi J. Miller and Gary Waller (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991) p. 183.

<sup>16</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, pp. 515-516; Scolar Press facsimile p. 439.

son-in-law's part, decides to kill her so that his precious noble blood will not be tainted. Her husband saves her from her father's violent rage, but Wroth takes the opportunity to satirise the father's high opinion of his honour. While alleging a parallel between himself and the father-in-law of Sirelius, Denny denies the truth of this story, calling Wroth a 'lying wonder'. He then goes on to threaten her, saying that he might as easily lie about her, and point out that she has made it 'easy' to do so. Denny says he could 'write a thousand lies of thee at least / & by thy lines discribe a drunken beast'. Denny says his accusation would be 'by thy lines', suggesting that Wroth's choice to write has laid her open to suspicion and provided evidence for such claims. In this way Wroth's situation echoes that of Sirelius' wife, as her writing is used as evidence of wider vice; meanwhile Denny, while denying the truth of the story, seems in some ways to replicate it. The conclusion of Denny's diatribe indicates that Wroth's decision to write is as truly offensive to him as her alleged lies, as he commands her to: 'worke o th' workes leave idle bookes alone / for wise & worthier women have writt none'. Denny's use of 'worthier' is perhaps a pun on Wroth's name, the comparative adjective highlighting where she has fallen short. If Wroth had worth and wisdom, she would not write at all.

This anxiety about the link between women's speech and their sexuality is apparent in Wroth's romance and sonnet sequence. Wroth's printed work features many writing women, and Pamphilia in particular, whose virtuoso poetry extends beyond the end of the romance and is given full voice in the sonnet sequence. Conscious of the tenuous position of the female voice, and in an effort to counteract any identification between female writing and promiscuity, in the printed romance Wroth ensures that



Pamphilia is not only evidently chaste, but emphatically so.<sup>17</sup> Wroth diligently constructs Pamphilia as a ‘true Christian woman’ in a manner that also includes speech.<sup>18</sup> Though Pamphilia loves Amphilanthus their love is never consummated, and in the sonnet sequence Pamphilia’s constant love is itself far more important than its object. Indeed, in the sonnets Pamphilia’s constancy fortifies her virtue, allowing her to resist the lures of lust: in the *corona*, which is the climax of the sequence, Pamphilia describes the purifying power of her form of true love as a ‘burning’ which ‘sinne abollisheth, and doth impart / Salves to all feare, with vertues which inspire / Soules with divine love’.<sup>19</sup> This unironic use of spiritual language and the absence of physical blazon of the beloved places Pamphilia firmly on a different path from her predecessor Astrophil.<sup>20</sup>

Wroth’s construction of the virtuous speaking woman reflects another strand of the discourse on gender in early modern England. Despite Denny’s famously vicious and gendered attack on Wroth’s decision to print, Wroth also received a series of positive responses to her writing in print.<sup>21</sup> Wroth, after all, was not such a ‘monster’ or aberration as Denny suggested, as she follows a strong precedent set by other female writers. As Elaine Beilin writes in her study of women writers in the English Renaissance, ‘these women were not so much wonders as signs: [...] they were a significant and

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<sup>17</sup> The manuscript continuation of the romance and the manuscript version of the sonnets suggests a different story, but the narrative in the printed text is one of chaste love. For an argument for chaste love in the sequence, see section 3.3.

<sup>18</sup> Elaine Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Woman Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 212.

<sup>19</sup> Wroth, P81. I expand on this argument in Chapter 5.

<sup>20</sup> Natasha Distiller notes the lack of blazon of the beloved and argues that ‘By purging her longing of desire, Pamphilia stays within the discourse of the good woman.’ Natasha Distiller, *Desire and Gender in the Sonnet Tradition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. 88-89.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, “Sleuthing the archives”, *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine Larson and Naomi J. Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 24.

comprehensive part of English culture.’<sup>22</sup> Like any literary producer Wroth was not an anomaly, disconnected from her surroundings, but the product of a culture. In writing a sonnet sequence Wroth did not only follow her male relatives, but also women like Anne Lok, Mary Stuart, and Anne Cecil de Vere.<sup>23</sup> Wroth also followed in the footsteps of Queen Elizabeth I, whose Petrarchan poetry was circulated during her lifetime and after her death, and whose education represented another side to Humanist attitudes to women’s learning.<sup>24</sup> However, it should be noted that Wroth’s choice of genre – that is, love poetry – was unusual and left her particularly vulnerable to the associations between female speech and promiscuity in a way that women like Mary Sidney and Anne Lok (who both wrote on religious topics) were not.<sup>25</sup> The taboo on female speech, therefore, was not the whole story in early modern gender politics.<sup>26</sup> Clarke argues that the emphasis on women’s silence in the early modern period has become an over-worn critical orthodoxy and does not accurately represent contemporary attitudes, which also included discussion of virtuous speech in women. In the seventeenth century ‘the degree to which a model of virtuous eloquent speech becomes a powerful convention in the representation of contemporary women, notably

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<sup>22</sup> Beilin, 1987, p. xvi.

<sup>23</sup> Rosalind Smith notes that ‘Although these texts are beset by problems of attribution and display a high level of generic mixing, they were read by at least some sections of their audiences as sonnet sequences by women.’ Rosalind Smith, *Sonnets and the English Woman Writer, 1560-1621* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 86.

<sup>24</sup> Rosalind Smith, pp. 86-87.

<sup>25</sup> For appropriate genres for women, see Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 17.

<sup>26</sup> Julie Crawford has argued that approaches to early modern women’s writing in the 1980s and 1990s have placed too much significance on misogynist voices but have failed to give sufficient weight to other contemporary discourses, *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 2.

in funeral sermons, is striking'.<sup>27</sup> Humanists like Sir Thomas More had set a strong precedent for educating their daughters and valuing the company of educated women.<sup>28</sup> Wroth had come into contact with famously well-educated women during her formative years, including Queen Elizabeth I, whose princely education in classical and modern languages (unlike that of Nereana, whose story I examine later in this chapter) suited her to rule, and Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke, whose education seems to have included French, Italian, Latin, Greek and other 'standard elements of the Humanist curriculum'.<sup>29</sup>

### 1.3 Authorising Classics

One of the ways Wroth sought to authorise her female voice was by demonstrating her Humanist education. In the following chapters I will look at how Wroth draws upon Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in her sonnet sequence to establish her intellectual authority. However, such classical authority was a double-edged sword for a woman writer to wield, as I will demonstrate in this section. I will then go on to argue that Wroth presents learning as a positive influence on women through the story of Nereana in the *Urania*. Stevenson's work on female neo-Latin writers in the early modern period demonstrates that, not only were women in Humanist circles educated in Latin and other ancient languages, but they also wrote in Latin, taking part in an international intellectual community. In their work these women show an

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<sup>27</sup> Danielle Clarke, "Speaking Women: Rhetoric and the Construction of Female Talk", *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.70-88, p. 76.

<sup>28</sup> Charlton, pp. 18-19; Stevenson, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.27 -28; Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I* (London: Phoenix Giant, 1997), p.12.

awareness of female classical authorities (including Sappho, Sulpicia, Praxilla, and Corinna), and of contemporary female Latinists with whom they communicated.<sup>30</sup> As writers of Latin texts, these women were able to take part in an exchange of knowledge that was happening all over early modern Europe, which often excluded women and men whose education did not extend to Latin. However, classical authorities were complicated for women writers. Their male peers sometimes praised female Latinists in correspondence as the ‘tenth muse’ or as a ‘second Sappho’, but both these accolades were avoided by women writers because they were intensely problematic and implicitly sexualised. The figure of Sappho, although perhaps the closest in equivalent status to Homer amongst women as a sort of arch-poet, was also seen as an overtly sexual figure, reinforcing the association between female literary production and lasciviousness. Ovid’s treatment of Sappho as a ‘crazy, ageing erotomaniac’ in his *Heroides* was seen as a factual account of her life, making her a potentially damaging authority.<sup>31</sup> Line Cottegnies argues that Wroth’s poetry interacts both with fragments of Sappho’s own poetry and with the presentation of Sappho in Ovid by presenting Pamphilia as Sappho’s opposite.<sup>32</sup> While less overtly sexualised than the figure of Sappho, the accolade of tenth muse was also charged because a male poet’s relationship with his muse was often imagined as a romantic or sexual.<sup>33</sup> However, the Roman goddess Minerva did provide a useful authority for women writers. In the way that much of classical

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<sup>30</sup> Stevenson, pp. 19-21.

<sup>31</sup> Stevenson, pp. 28-29.

<sup>32</sup> Line Cottegnies argues that Wroth presents Pamphilia as a fallen woman and interacts with Sappho as a way of navigating shame: Line Cottegnies, “The Sapphic Context of Mary Wroth’s *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*”, *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, ed. by Susan Wiseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 60-76.

<sup>33</sup> Stevenson, p. 27.

wisdom was reconciled with Christianity by early modern thinkers, the goddess Minerva became strongly identified with the Biblical figure of 'Holy Wisdom, beloved of God'. Holy Wisdom was a female figure, with some cross-over with the Bride of Christ, who, like Minerva, represented both wisdom and chastity.<sup>34</sup> Unlike Wroth, most women writers of the Renaissance, both in Latin and in the vernacular, eschewed love poetry, to avoid alignment with a model like Sappho, and concentrated their writing and translation on religious or domestic matters.

Wroth's presentation of erudite women clearly follows the Humanist doctrine that education promotes virtue in women. The women less learned than Pamphilia in the romance are also less virtuous. In book II of the printed *Urania* Pamphilia encounters an eloquent and independent female character who, providing a stark contrast to her rival and our heroine, is not only a bad woman, but a bad ruler. Nereana is criticised as proud, arrogant, 'fond', and unladylike ('Knight-like') in her pursuit of a man who does not love her.<sup>35</sup> Her pride and failure to listen to advice is punished when she is humiliated. After seeking out Pamphilia to assess her as a rival, Nereana goes into the woods, where she is accosted by a lunatic. Initially the mad man, Alanus, thinks she is a woman he loves called Liana, then her rejection forces his madness to transform, and he decides that she must be the goddess of the woods, disguised as his beloved. He decides to force her to show 'her own shape', so ties her to a tree and takes most of her clothes off, using the remnants to dress her as a buskined goddess of the woods.<sup>36</sup> This episode is

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<sup>34</sup> Stevenson, pp. 24-25.

<sup>35</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 194; Scholar Press facsimile p. 163.

<sup>36</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 197; Scholar Press facsimile p. 166.

dripping with playful allusions to the stories of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, not only in its theme of change, but also in its focus on an unwillingly pursued woman. Dressed as a sylvan goddess, Nereana flees through the woods, with Alanus in pursuit, until she 'breathlesse, cast herself downe by a cleere spring, (into it she was about) but the picture of her owne selfe did so amaze her, as she would not goe so neere unto her metamorphos'd figure.'<sup>37</sup> Wroth transforms Nereana into a figure from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, catching sight of her own reflection. In this moment Wroth might seem to be making a nod to Narcissus, appropriate to Nereana's previous pride and vanity, but in fact the most pertinent reference here is to the moment when Io sees her own reflection.

venit et ad ripas, ubi ludere saepe solebat,  
 Inachidas: rictus novaque ut conspexit in unda  
 cornua, pertimuit seque exsternata refugit. (I.638-640)<sup>38</sup>

Unto her father Inach's banks she also did resort,  
 Where many a time and oft before she had been wont to sport.  
 Now when she looked in the stream and saw her hornèd head,  
 She was aghast and from herself would all in haste have fled.  
 (lines 792-795)<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 198; Scholar Press facsimile p. 166.

<sup>38</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller, revised by G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 42 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), p. 46.

<sup>39</sup> Arthur Golding, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 54.

Like Io, Nereana comes to the water seeking comfort and is appalled by her transformed appearance. It must be noted that the episode surrounding Io's view of herself in the river is characterised by Io's frustrated inability to communicate. She tries to raise her arms in supplication to Argus, but she has none; when she tries to complain, she is terrified by the lowing that has replaced her voice; and when she meets her father and siblings, she wishes to tell them who she is, but cannot.<sup>40</sup> Eventually Io manages to scratch the two letters of her name in the sand with a hoof, but Wroth's image of Io at the river comes before this victory and is in the midst of Io's prolonged inability to communicate. With this reference to Io, Wroth shows Nereana as a captured and transformed woman, who cannot help herself because she cannot speak effectively. Nereana's discovery of her own transformation also recalls Ovid's treatment of Actaeon, who, on seeing his transformed appearance in water, also experiences a crisis of communication on discovering his reflection. Like Actaeon, Nereana has transformed from unwise hunter to being hunted. For contemporary readers the allusion would have reinforced their understanding of the excess and unsuitability of her passions.<sup>41</sup> Wroth's simultaneous allusions to Io and Actaeon here emphasise the connection to Ovid's text.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For Io's attempt to appeal to Argus, see Ovid I.635-638, p. 46; Golding, p. 53.

<sup>41</sup> 'ut vero vultus et cornua vidit in unda, / "me miserum!" dicturus erat: vox nulla secuta est!' Ovid, III.200-203, p. 138; 'But when he saw his face / And hornèd temples in the brook, he would have cried, "Alas!" / But as for then no kind of speech out of his lips could pass', Golding, p. 100.

<sup>42</sup> This dual reference to Io and Actaeon invites an ambivalent response to Nereana that combines both pity and judgement. Lynn Enterline has argued that Io's experience can be read as an expression of what it means to be a subject (for Nereana, transformed from queen to captive, this is an appropriate allusion): Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 45. For Io representing a crisis of identity in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus*, see James Harmer, *Renaissance Literature and Linguistic Creativity* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 148. Any reference to Actaeon in literature of this period is heavily freighted with meaning. The name was evocative of emotional turmoil or the dangers of excessive passion: 'a warning that we

From these famous Ovidian tales, Wroth turns to yet another. The following day when the mad man awakes, his delusion is again transformed, and he believes that Nereana is Arethusa, who had been transformed into a stream, and has now regained a human form, and asks her to bless the spring.<sup>43</sup> This series of Ovidian allusions is leading up to a literary punchline:

Nereana, as much afraid as her proud spirit would permit her,  
remembering how hee had used her the day before, amazed  
with what he said, never having heard of such a thing as a  
*Metamorphosis*, her wit lying another way, scorning his sight,  
disdaining his speech, and yet forced to suffer it; in few words,  
doubting that silence would might enrage him, she made this  
answer. [...] <sup>44</sup>

Literally speaking Nereana has never heard of such a thing as the metamorphosis she has just witnessed, but the very Ovidian build-up to this announcement transforms the repeated ‘metamorphosis’ into a pun: Wroth tells her reader that Nereana does not know her *Metamorphoses* either. This famous schoolroom text acts as a metonymy for classical knowledge. The

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will be hunted by the dogs of our sensual excess’: Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 146. For the conflicting ideas associated with Actaeon in Renaissance literature (from the suffering Christ, to the spend-thrift who got his just deserts, to a representation of the cruelty of fate), see Sarah Annes Brown and Andrew Taylor, “Introduction”, *Ovid in English, 1480-1625*, ed. by Sarah Annes Brown and Andrew Taylor (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013), p. 3. Actaeon’s identification with the frustrated Petrarchan wooer is appropriate here as this connotation highlights Nereana’s inappropriate wooing: for Actaeon and the Petrarchan lover, see Distiller, pp. 59-60.

<sup>43</sup> Like Nereana after her, Ovid’s Arethusa – without her clothes – is pursued by an unwanted suitor (V.601-606), after which Arethusa is transformed into a spring (V.631-636), Ovid, pp. 280-282; Golding, pp. 172-173.

<sup>44</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 200; Scholar Press facsimile p. 168.



proud princess does not know her Ovid, so she is ill-equipped to deal with this situation. Nereana's lack of education, or her lack of wit in the field of education ('her wit lying another way'), means that she is helpless in the face of this vacillating man. The scene becomes a pantomime inversion of the relationship between Pamphilia and Amphilanthus. Amphilanthus' changes in love are caricatured in Alanius' endlessly metamorphic delusions of love. Nereana, stubborn, not constant because she lacks virtue, is a negative of Pamphilia. Where Pamphilia may Stoically withstand an inconstant man, Nereana is herself perceived as insane (by both Philarchos and Alanius) and cannot withstand man's inconstancy because of her lack of a classical education. Through her reference to Io, Wroth shows Nereana to be a woman who is not equipped to speak, and is therefore vulnerable to the whims of men, and her body open to interpretations that she does not intend. As if anticipating the claim that a woman's writing laid her open to suspicion in Denny's verse libel, but in fact refuting a common contemporary discourse, Wroth demonstrates the opposite, as here it is Nereana's failure to communicate that makes her the plaything of a man's imagination. The episode, however light-hearted, and full of literary wit, certainly enters into contemporary debate about the necessity of education for women. For a woman to withstand man's inconstancy, she must be educated, specifically in the classics.

It must be noted, however, that Wroth is never only talking about gender politics; Pamphilia and Nereana are both queens. The episode also explores governance, as Nereana's dialogue with Alanius questions whether a

true prince can 'bee distressed' as Nereana is.<sup>45</sup> Alanius questions Nereana's princely nature because of her distress and apparent insanity. Her inability to govern herself and her lack of constancy are qualities unsuitable to a prince, as the insane Alanius points out. Beilin reads Nereana's encounter with Alanius as a 'Wrothian satire on the concept of ruler as god', wherein Nereana – a ruler – meets a representation of the people.<sup>46</sup> Like a conversation with a Shakespearean fool, this dialogue reveals a very real question mark over Nereana's ability to rule. When she returns to her kingdom, her subjects have replaced her with her sister, whom she had imprisoned. However, Wroth's vision of revolution is incomplete: Nereana is imprisoned, but she is then released, and chastened by her experience, becomes a just ruler. Wroth does not suggest the outright removal of a rightful ruler, but she does insist quite threateningly on the necessity of just and less autocratic governance. What is particularly interesting is Wroth's idea that a knowledge of the classics is bound up in the qualities of a good ruler. The Alanius episode ends with a cruelly comical image of Nereana, who has been so obnoxious that even the madman cannot stand her, making her way across hillsides, and using that vantage point to see passers-by and hide from them. The narrator closes with the words 'thus was truth revenged of ignorance, shee continuing thus.'<sup>47</sup> Nereana's ignorance gets its comeuppance, but importantly her ignorance is found not only in her pride,

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<sup>45</sup> Wroth, *Urania* 1, p. 200; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 168.

<sup>46</sup> Beilin, "Winning 'the harts of the people'", *Pilgrimage for Love: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honour of Josephine A. Roberts*, ed. by Sigrid King (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999), pp. 15-16.

<sup>47</sup> Wroth, *Urania* 1, p. 201; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 168.

her unladylike pursuit of love, or in her behaviour to Pamphilia, but also in her ignorance of the *Metamorphoses* and the classics.

#### 1.4 Being An Hermaphrodite

Mary Wroth, writing in the vernacular, did not confine herself to religious topics (although the sonnets include religious themes) or to translation, choosing instead to follow her uncle's example and write love poetry. In a subsequent letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 1621/2, Denny advised Wroth to follow her aunt's example of translating religious works. He wrote that he hoped Wroth 'may followe the rare, and pious example of your vertuous and learned Aunt, who translated so many godly books and especially the holly [*sic*] psalms of David'.<sup>48</sup> While Wroth was undoubtedly influenced by her aunt, the form, titles, and many themes of her work draw ostentatiously upon the authority of her uncle. Wroth's writing, though frequently concerned with the virtues of women, often follows masculine patterns.<sup>49</sup> In his verse attack, Denny implied that Wroth was monstrous for taking on masculine qualities. In her response Wroth did not refute the idea that the writing woman is hermaphrodite. Instead, Wroth returns to Denny that he is 'an hermaphrodite in sense'.<sup>50</sup> Wroth implies that Denny's sense is confused, it is not one thing or another, but the phrase also implies that his masculine

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Denny, "Appendix VII: Sir Edward Denny to Lady Mary Wroth", *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. by Josephine A. Roberts (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 239.

<sup>49</sup> Danielle Clarke urges scholars not to 'preclude or wilfully ignore the fact that women writers use the male voice' by choice, and this choice can not necessarily be attributed to oppression. 'Introduction', *This Double Voice*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), pp. 6-9.

<sup>50</sup> All quotations from Wroth's response to Denny's verse libel come from a transcription of Nottingham Clifton MSS, CL LM 85/3, "Hermaphrodite Poems", *Mary Wroth's Poetry: An Electronic Edition*, ed. by Paul Salzman (Melborne, La Trobe University, 2012), np.

intelligence is tainted by a feminine lack of sense. In the rest of her writing Wroth draws on positive, contemporary ideas of the writing or speaking woman as hermaphrodite that existed alongside the misogynist discourse represented by Denny's letter. Like the female Latinists who adopted the man-like Minerva as their totem, there were women who made a virtue out of enacting masculine-coded characteristics. Queen Elizabeth I was portrayed, and portrayed herself, as manlike, and therefore more able to fulfil her role as sovereign.<sup>51</sup> As I will show, in *Urania*, writing and being learned remains coded as masculine, and women who display these attributes are not unproblematic. It is only women who balance these features with qualities coded as feminine that are characterised as virtuous. The particularly female authority that Clarke describes must occur in balance with masculine qualities to create a virtuous character, rather like the balance of humours needed to create a healthy body.<sup>52</sup>

In *Urania* the narrator exclaims: 'O women, how excellent are you, when you take the right way? else, I must confesse, you are children of men, and like them faultfull', which implies women are capable of more virtue than men.<sup>53</sup> Despite this, intelligence and virtue are described as masculine in the romance. Describing Lady Lucenia, Wroth writes, 'One Lady among the rest, or rather above the rest, for exquisite wit and rare spirit, so perfect in them, as she excelled her sex so much, as her perfections were stiled masculine.'<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Mary Beth Rose argues that Elizabeth I constructs her speaking position (and establishes her 'heroic identity' and 'royal authority') by 'monopolizing all gendered positions, taking rhetorical advantage of the special prestige of both female and male subject positions as these were understood in the Renaissance without consistently privileging either', *Gender and Heroism in Early Modern English Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 27.

<sup>52</sup> Clarke, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 44; Scolar Press facsimile, p. 36.

<sup>54</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 161; Scolar Press facsimile, p. 134.

Even the romance's eponymous character Urania supports the idea that judgement, self-restraint and other virtues are masculine. Later, when Pamphilia takes to her bed and cries, Urania berates her friend for this mournful behaviour:

Where is that judgement, and discreet govern'd spirit, for  
which this and all other places that have been happy with the  
knowledge of your name, hath made you famous? will you now  
fall under the groanes of the meanest esteemed passion?  
Where is that resolution, which full of great knowledge  
despised the greatest Princes when they wore loves livery;  
must this sink while tossing follies swimme? call your powers  
together, you that have been admired for a Masculine spirit,  
will you descend below the poorest Femenine love? [...] if your  
people knewe this, how can they hope of your government,  
that can no better governe one poor passion? how can you  
command others that cannot master your selfe; or make laws,  
that cannot counsel, or sovereignise over a poor thought?<sup>55</sup>

Urania contrasts Pamphilia's 'Masculine spirit' with her 'femenine [sic]' love, suggesting that the latter weakens her, and that, if they knew, the people would be frightened by this lack of control. The character of Urania questions her friend's behaviour, and her well-organised oration, which continues for over four pages, fits neatly within early modern discourses on gender.

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<sup>55</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 468; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 398.

Urania's argument 'how can you command others that cannot master your selfe' reflects a similar argument to John Knox's proposition in *The First Blast* that women cannot rule themselves, and therefore, should not rule anyone else.<sup>56</sup> The idea that a woman would not be fit to rule, due to her inability to govern herself, led Queen Elizabeth I to present herself as man-like. This type of hermaphroditism was a positive one, which reassured subjects of her ability to govern. Rather than refuting the idea that women were unmanageable, Elizabeth confirmed this and proclaimed her masculine qualities. Stephen Orgel argues that in the early modern imagination 'witches and queens [were] two sides of a single coin', because witches were considered monstrous and threatening because they took on masculine attributes, but queens were virtuous because of their masculine attributes.<sup>57</sup> Urania's advice conforms to this discourse, suggesting Pamphilia's feminine qualities should be replaced by the masculine to be an effective ruler. However, it is not only Pamphilia's masculine attributes that are presented positively by Wroth's romance and sonnet sequence. The discussion is complicated by the fact that Urania's argument, though well-reasoned, is not entirely correct. While the narrative voice and Pamphilia both acknowledge that Urania is correct that Pamphilia's behaviour is wrong and that she must master herself, the wider narrative shows that she is wrong to say that Pamphilia should abandon feminine love. Pamphilia declares that she must 'still maintaine a vertuous constancy' and swears to remain faithful to her love.<sup>58</sup> It is this feminine virtue of constancy, not any masculine attribute,

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<sup>56</sup> John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (Geneva: J. Poullain and A. Rebul, 1558), sig. B2r.

<sup>57</sup> Stephen Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 110.

<sup>58</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 470; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 400.

that Wroth presents Pamphilia using to govern herself and her country.<sup>59</sup>

Wroth makes clear that her good governance is a female attribute, when she describes Pamphilia returning to the country of that name, who, though sad, 'she lost not her selfe; for her government continued just and brave, like that Lady she was, *wherein she shewed her heart was not to be stirr'd, though her private fortunes shooke round about her.*'<sup>60</sup> Pamphilia's 'just and brave' governance is not only the product of, but also the evidence of, her constant heart. In this way, Wroth promotes feminine virtue alongside masculine.

The problematic characters in *Urania* are those who do not balance their masculine qualities with female virtues. Examples include Nereana's questing for love, and Antissia's poetry in *Urania 2*. Lucenia, whose virtues, as we have seen, are described as manlike, becomes an antagonist in the romance. Despite being married, and being rejected by Amphilanthus, she pursues him.<sup>61</sup> Lucenia's manlike intelligence and wit has, as early modern misogynists suspected such learning would, led her towards promiscuity and to the witch side of Orgel's coin metaphor.<sup>62</sup> Wroth's model suggests that, while her intelligence may indeed be manlike, Lucenia clearly lacks the womanly constancy that allows the virtuous Pamphilia to continue to govern herself and her country. Wroth promotes the idea that a good balance of masculine and feminine attributes is necessary for true virtue. It should also

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<sup>59</sup> The romance firmly genders constancy as a female attribute. Amphilanthus is not alone in his changeability. Inconstancy is frequently described as a male attribute throughout the romance. The earlier 'children of men' quote describes a woman whose glorious self-restraint is due to her constant love for a man who has died.

<sup>60</sup> Emphasis mine. Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 484; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 411.

<sup>61</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, pp. 161-164; facsimile, pp. 134-137. Lucenia reappears as a rival to Pamphilia throughout, including in the Hell of Deceit vision.

<sup>62</sup> Unlike Nereana, Lucenia is well-acquainted with classical authorities; her predatory behaviour is learned from them. Wroth alludes to Ovid's controversial text *The Art of Love* as she describes Lucenia's strategy: 'Shee who now was by the art of love taught to watch all opportunities [...]'. She also compares Lucenia to Cleopatra. *Urania I*, p. 162; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 135.

be noted that, in her description of Lucenia, Wroth writes that her excellent wit was 'stiled masculine' rather than 'was masculine'. Thus, Wroth acknowledges the tradition in which intelligence is a male virtue but does not necessarily accept that tradition. Similarly, Wroth's reply to Denny, in keeping with the tradition of answer poems, engages with the discourse he has introduced, but this does not necessarily signal Wroth's commitment to that tradition.

### 1.5 Manuscript, Print, and Authority

As we have seen, despite her unusual choice of the masculine genre of love poetry, Wroth's construction of Pamphilia as a female authority was influenced by contemporary discourses on women's speech. Perhaps more extraordinary than Wroth's decision to write, then, was her decision to print her work. The remainder of this chapter will situate Wroth's 1621 publication in contemporary print and manuscript culture. Despite the fact that the printing press was not new technology, in the late 1500s and the early 1600s, manuscript culture still thrived, as did an ambivalent attitude towards print publication. Manuscript publication and print publication coexisted, each serving a different purpose and audience. Aristocratic poets, and those with aristocratic connections circulated their work in manuscript, amongst small coteries. This type of manuscript circulation meant that a text stayed, to some degree, within the originator's control, as he or she might choose who should receive and exscribe the work. Of course, a manuscript could fall into the wrong hands, and another real disadvantage of manuscript circulation was the unfixed nature of the text, which might be changed by every pair of hands through which it passed. A printed work, on the other hand, is 'closed'



to such revisions, tamed, and controlled.<sup>63</sup> The enormous disadvantage of print publication was that while the text itself might be under control, the readership of the work was not. Anyone outside the author's trusted circle could get their hands on a text. Importantly, print publication also had a far lower cultural capital, as it implied that the work's author did not have the coterie connections to circulate manuscripts among. Rather than the gentlemanly amateurism of manuscript circulation, print publication was also tainted with commerce. Saunders has argued that the 'stigma of print' led some authors to eschew this type of publication.<sup>64</sup>

Despite this supposed stigma, print publication had its own place within literary culture. The posthumous print publication of Sir Philip Sidney's romance and sonnets further muddled the waters. While Sidney's own choice not to publish his works in print set a precedent for a continuation of the aristocratic model of manuscript circulation, their posthumous publication 'carved out a newly defined gentlemanly authorial role'.<sup>65</sup> As Gavin Alexander suggests, Sidney's work had become, in some ways, public property.<sup>66</sup> The message of his works was being presented, by its editors Fulke Greville and Mary Sidney respectively, as being important to

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<sup>63</sup> H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts, 1558-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 15; Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> Saunders, J.W., "The Stigma of Print: A Note on the Social Bases of Tudor Poetry", *Essays in Criticism*, I, 2 (1951), pp. 139-64. Woudhuysen has subsequently questioned to what degree there really was a stigma attached to print, suggesting that manuscript was simply more appealing due to its social capital, pp. 14-15. Arthur F Marotti also argues that engaging in manuscript circulation was a desirable class marker, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 34.

<sup>65</sup> Wall, p. 13. Marotti argues that Wroth's decision to print was authorised by Sidney's publication, see Marotti, 1995, p. 238.

<sup>66</sup> Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 293.

national policy.<sup>67</sup> Woudhuysen argues that Sidney himself seems to have considered print publication for his defence of his uncle Leicester: it ends with the challenge, ‘And from the date of this writing, imprinted and published, I will three months expect thine answer’, suggesting that he could at least ‘profess to countenance the printing of a political tract.’<sup>68</sup> Public service, therefore, was seen as a legitimate reason to print. In Guazzo’s *Civile Conversation* the address to the reader suggests counsel to one’s prince as a legitimate reason to write and to print; he states that the chief need for learning is that it qualifies the writer to ‘counsayle your Prince’ and in this same section Guazzo praises Caesar’s scholarship, that he ‘wrote Bookes’ and ‘came in print’.<sup>69</sup> James I echoed this model of a scholarly king who served the good of the public by printing his books, *Basilikon Doron*, and *Daemonologie*.<sup>70</sup> Even before her work came into print, Wroth became associated – through a series of dedications – with a ‘print community’ of authors who have been designated by scholars as ‘Spenserians’.<sup>71</sup> The Jacobean Spenserians were poets who expressed their political dissatisfaction through Elizabethan literary nostalgia and supported the interventionist, Protestant politics that was spearheaded by Wroth’s cousin, and subsequent lover, William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke. Michelle O’Callaghan has argued that Spenserian poets were attracted to print as a

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<sup>67</sup> Joel Davies, “Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke”, *Studies in Philology*, 101, 4 (2004), pp. 401-430.

<sup>68</sup> Woudhuysen, p. 210.

<sup>69</sup> Stephen Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation*, trans G. Pettie (London: Thomas East, 1586), pp. 2-3

<sup>70</sup> Jenny Wormald, ‘James VI and I (1566–1625)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Sept 2014 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/pugwash.lib.warwick.ac.uk/view/article/14592>, accessed 14 Aug 2017]

<sup>71</sup> I have taken the term ‘print community’ from Michelle O’Callaghan, *The ‘Shepherd’s Nation’: Jacobean Spenserians and the Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612-25* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), p. 3.

way of widening the public sphere, and extending intellectual debate beyond the court; indeed, O'Callaghan presents the rejection of manuscript circulation in courtly coteries as a form of rejection of the court in favour of the decentralised power of the aristocratic country house.<sup>72</sup> Wroth received dedications from poets associated with these politics – George Chapman (1609), Joshua Sylvester (1612), and George Wither (1613) – all hailing her as a literary heir to Philip Sidney.<sup>73</sup> In the year before the publication of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* Wroth's connection with this print community was strengthened:

Mary Wroth's literary status as a patron of this group was reactivated through the publication of a number of collected editions of their work, editions that reproduced the earlier dedications, positioning Wroth as a Sidneian, Protestant patron.<sup>74</sup>

Rosalind Smith argues that this close and publicly cultivated association with Spenserian poets indicates that Wroth's 1621 publication ought to be read as a Spenserian text itself. Both O'Callaghan and Smith also note the significance of Wroth's choice of publishers for her sonnet sequence and romance. John Grismond and John Marriot were known for printing provocative and radical texts associated with the dissenting Protestant politics of the Sidney-Herbert alliance.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> O'Callaghan, pp. 3-20.

<sup>73</sup> Rosalind Smith, pp. 99-100.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>75</sup> O'Callaghan, p. 17; Rosalind Smith, pp. 100-101.

Into this changing literary culture, where print and manuscript publication existed alongside one another, Wroth chose to launch her romance and sonnet sequence in print. Wroth's connections to Spenserian poets strongly suggest that her choice of print was politically motivated, yet her decision to print remains puzzling because Wroth was a woman. For women, the matter of printing was still more fraught and complicated than for their male contemporaries. Not only the social status, but also the chastity of a woman would be called into question if she printed her writing.

In a world in which privilege was attached to coterie circulation and published words were associated with promiscuity, the female writer could become a 'fallen' woman in a double sense: branded as a harlot or a member of the nonelite.<sup>76</sup>

Wroth's choice to publish her work was controversial not only due to her social status but because of her gender. The association between promiscuity and women's speech was only heightened by the idea that when in print her works became 'public property'.<sup>77</sup> Despite her disingenuous assertion that she did not sanction the printing of *Urania* and *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, the evidence suggests that Wroth was very much behind the decision to print.<sup>78</sup> Considering the pitfalls of print, that doubly affected Wroth as a woman and as a member of the social elite, the question of why

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<sup>76</sup> Wall, p. 281.

<sup>77</sup> Woudhuysen, p. 16.

<sup>78</sup> For example, the frontispiece of the text is evidence that the author had a firm grip on her printers: it depicts, very accurately a scene from the *Urania*, and was engraved by Simon de Passe, a known associate of the Sidney-Herbert circle, Hannay, 2010, p. 233.

she should choose to print is a compelling one. Margaret Ezell has warned against the anachronistic tendency to assume that print publication was sought after by women or seen as a mark of success or fixed authority.<sup>79</sup> The dedications to Wroth's work attest to the fact that her poetry was already circulating in manuscript.<sup>80</sup> Women in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were very much engaged in the circulation of verse in manuscript circulation; Wroth's choice to print was unusual.<sup>81</sup> I have suggested that print might be an appropriate mode for promulgating a political message; however, this might also be done through manuscript circulation, just as Sidney's letter to Elizabeth I, arguing against the French marriage, appears to have been professionally copied and disseminated in large numbers in manuscript form.<sup>82</sup> Although the political motives behind Wroth's publication necessitated a wider reach than her immediate coterie, the question remains: why print? Paul Salzman has recently described how Wroth's response to Denny's attack was suppressed.<sup>83</sup> While Denny's verse was circulated and copied, Wroth's answer was not considered worth circulating by its readers. While this frustration post-dated Wroth's print publication, she must have been aware of the possibility that this male-dominated manuscript network might refuse to circulate her work, and therefore took that power out of their hands.

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<sup>79</sup> Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 57.

<sup>80</sup> For the circulation of Wroth's work in manuscript and print, see Ilona Bell, "The Circulation of Writings by Lady Mary Wroth", *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Sidneys, 1500-1700*, vol. 2: Literature, ed. by Margaret P. Hannay, Michael G. Brennan and Mary Ellen Lamb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 77-85.

<sup>81</sup> Marotti, pp. 48-61.

<sup>82</sup> Woudhuysen, pp. 151-53.

<sup>83</sup> Paul Salzman, "Mary Wroth and hermaphroditic circulation", *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, ed. by Susan Wiseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 117-130.

In this chapter I have stated that Wroth advertised her learning through her references to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in her sonnet sequence *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. In the next three chapters I will explore Wroth's poetic allusions to Ovid's poem in detail and examine how she used these allusions to construct her own poetic authority.

## 2. Sidney, Ovid, and Imitation

### 2.1 Introduction

Wroth's sonnet sequence, published in print in 1621, seems in many ways to recall the literature of a previous generation. The sonnet craze that characterised 'Golden Age' Elizabethan literature was long gone, making Wroth's sequence a very late example of this genre. On the frontispiece of her publication, Wroth lists the literary giants – her own family – whom she follows.<sup>1</sup> The titles and genres of the two works (and their print publication) echo those of her uncle.<sup>2</sup> *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* recalls *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, while *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* evokes its forerunner *Astrophil and Stella*. The contents of Wroth's works shadow not only Philip Sidney's work, but that of her father and aunt. These recent models are not the only ones that Wroth follows; like most early modern authors, she also draws on classical authorities. As an early modern reader, writer, and cultural consumer, Wroth was part of a culture of imitation, and her work, unsurprisingly, reflects many of the practices, preoccupations and anxieties of that culture. The culture in which Wroth wrote was one grounded in imitation, not only in its literary production: Humanist theories of education, ideas of decorum, and of moral philosophy, were all based on

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<sup>1</sup> See fig. 1. For Wroth's imitation of her uncle through formal features and metrical experimentation, see Paul Salzman, "Lady Mary Wroth's Poetry", *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Sidneys, 1500-1700*, vol. 2: Literature, ed. by Margaret Hannay, Michael Brennan and Mary Ellen Lamb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 254-255.

<sup>2</sup> Although Philip Sidney's works were not published in print during his lifetime, the posthumous publication of his work created an ambivalent blueprint for print publication. See chapter 1.5 of this thesis.

imitation.<sup>3</sup> For thinkers of the Renaissance, the classics – the work of ancient Roman and Greek authors – were a repository of knowledge, morality, and good writing. Not to follow such authorities would have been unthinkable, but following in the shadow of such revered figures also presented its own problems. This chapter will contextualise Wroth's sonnet sequence in this culture of imitation and I will argue that Wroth takes pains to present her poetic voice as what Thomas Greene would term 'heuristic imitation'. First, I will briefly survey the culture of imitation in which Wroth wrote, with particular attention to Philip Sidney's attitude to the subject as laid out in his *Defence of Poesy*. In the next section I will argue that Wroth's own attitude to imitation is evidenced in her sonnet P37. In this sonnet Wroth draws on the classical image of the bee as a skilful imitator. Next, I will demonstrate Wroth's imitative methods in relation to three sonnets from *Astrophil and Stella*. In the final three sections of the chapter I will consider the figure of Ovid's Echo – a figure considered by many Renaissance readers to be the embodiment of the poor imitator – and explore the ways in which Wroth employed this figure to negotiate her position as a female author in a culture of imitation. I will show that Wroth's heuristic approach to Ovid's Echo is used to present herself as a thoughtful, learned, and skilled imitator. Through this method, I will show that Wroth sought to establish herself as a poetic authority, and her speaker, Pamphilia, as an exemplary figure.

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<sup>3</sup> For imitation in Renaissance education, see Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 50; Timothy Hampton, *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (London: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 53; Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 20-23; Jane Grogan, *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in The Faerie Queene* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009), pp. 51-53; Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare's Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, and Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).





Fig. 1 - The frontispiece from *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* (1621).

## 2.2 Imitation in Renaissance England

This section will provide a brief survey of the early modern culture of imitation in which Wroth wrote, before moving on to consider how Philip Sidney – Wroth’s uncle – conceptualised the challenge of intelligent imitation. This thesis considers Wroth’s intertextuality as a form of imitation because Renaissance culture was immersed in the practice of imitation. Education in early modern England was based on imitation. Schoolmasters taught Latin grammar to boys from the age of seven, and they progressed through a programme of increasingly complicated Latin texts, getting to know them intimately through practising *translatio*, *paraphrasis*, *imitatio*, and *allusio*.<sup>4</sup> Boys would learn to translate Latin into English, and back into Latin. They began with short extracts, sayings and *sententiae*, and progressed to longer prose or poetic works. When scholars became more competent at Latin composition, they would be encouraged to emulate the style or imitate the forms of their classical exemplars. As students developed their skills in both grammar and rhetoric their imitative methods became more sophisticated and the Latin tags and figures of speech with which they had become familiar over the years of their education were woven into their compositions as erudite allusions.<sup>5</sup> Imitation in the schoolroom was not simply verbal, but physical. Children not only learnt the appropriate rhetoric for persons and situations through the practice of *prosopopoeia*, but were also taught the gestures which should accompany them.<sup>6</sup> This learning

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age* (London: Penguin Books, 2008), pp. 79-101.

<sup>6</sup> Lynn Enterline’s *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, and Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) discusses the role of imitation in education and in the formation of identity throughout, but in particular, see pp. 29, 43-44. Jennifer Munroe points out that in needlework women were encouraged to begin with

through imitation went beyond the school room, and appropriate behaviour was taught through imitation of exemplars from Biblical and classical figures, to those observed in every-day life.<sup>7</sup> The courtier, for example, learned appropriate behaviour through the imitation of more experienced fellows, and as Bate points out, the connection between literary and behavioural imitation is made explicit by Castiglione, who applies Seneca's simile of the reader and the bee, going from flower to flower and making its selections, to the courtier selecting and adopting good behaviour.<sup>8</sup>

While distinct categories of imitation that existed in the schoolroom – where a pupil's exercises might progress from *imitatio* to *aemulatio* – became blurred once lessons and exercises had been left behind, a much-contested hierarchy of imitation certainly remained.<sup>9</sup> Questions of how accurately (or slavishly) an authority ought to be followed, and to what degree the poet should inject his or her own inventions were subjects for debate among sixteenth- and seventeenth-century poets. Many early modern literary theorists acknowledged a debt to Horace's *Ars Poetica*. Philip Sidney's *Defence of Poesy* does so prominently from the beginning. Horace's poem advises a careful balance between innovation and imitation:

difficile est proprie communia dicere, tuque

rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus

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previously designed patterns and use these as inspiration for their own creative variations. Munroe argues that Wroth follows this same pattern in her writing: Jennifer Munroe, "In This Strang Labourinth, How Shall I Turne?": Needlework, Gardens, and Writing in Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 24, 1 (2005), pp. 35-40.

<sup>7</sup> Lynn Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998) p. 84.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Greene, p. 51.

quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus:  
publica materies privati iuris erit, si  
non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem  
nec verbo verbum curabis reddere fidus  
interpres nec desilies imitator in artum,  
unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.

Jonson translates it as:

'Tis hard to speake things common properly:  
And thou maist better bring a Rhapsody  
Of *Homers* forth in Acts, then of thine owne  
First publish things unspoken, and unknown.  
Yet, common matter thou thine owne maist make,  
If thou the vile, broad-troden ring forsake.  
For, being a Poet, thou maist faign, create,  
Not care, as thou wouldst faithfully translate,  
To render word for word: nor with thy sleight  
Of imitation leap into a straight  
From whence thy modesty, or Poems Law  
Forbids thee forth againe thy foot to draw.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Horace, *Horace on the Art of Poetry*, ed. by Edward Henry Blakeney (London: Scholartis Press, 1928), pp. 27, 114. I have chosen this edition because it includes Ben Jonson's own translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica*, published in 1640, thus providing a near-contemporary interpretation. For Jonson's identification with, and allusions to, Horace, see Robert B. Pierce, "Ben Jonson's Horace and Horace's Ben Jonson", *Studies in Philology*, 78, 1 (1981), pp. 20-31.

Horace warns against a laborious word-for-word translation, but he does not advise new subject matter. Jonson's translation, wittily punning on feet, acknowledges that imitation is a risky business in which the poet can easily misstep. To achieve eloquence the writer's imitation could not be a simple copy, but should necessarily include something original, some invention, genius, or novelty.<sup>11</sup> What was the dividing line between ape-ish or childish *imitatio* and the more sophisticated *aemulatio*? Terence Cave has argued that ideas of imitation were highly contested, but to achieve an imitation – as opposed to a 'dead copy' – required the metabolising and translation of a text to suit its speaker, or the addition of 'genius'.<sup>12</sup> The idea of bringing new life, or 'invention' to an existing authority is well encapsulated by Greene's model of 'heuristic imitation', defined as a text that transfers the text from the *mundus significans* of the original writer to that of the imitator.<sup>13</sup> This transfer of the *mundus significans* allows the imitator to say something both new and true to their own time or experience, as the transfer acknowledges the distance from the source text, as well as its proximity. A new meaning is added to the existing layered meanings of the text. In this way, the successful imitator is one who can also become an authority in his or her own right: they have associated themselves with the authority of their source and have created a new variation that might be, in its turn, imitated.

Because Philip Sidney's work occupied an authoritative position for Wroth, it is important to examine his ideas on imitation more closely.<sup>14</sup> In his

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<sup>11</sup> Terence Cave, *The Cornucopian Text* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), p. 64.

<sup>12</sup> Cave surveys the much contested debate between Erasmian and Ciceronian thinking on imitation, pp. 35-77.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Greene, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Philip Sidney was by no means the only author who wrote about the difficulties of imitation. George Puttenham addresses the poet's relationship with classical literature in *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), as does Samuel Daniel's *A Defence of Rhyme* (1603). For

*Defence of Poesy*, Philip Sidney (himself an authority with singular significance for Wroth as her uncle) famously tackled the question of how to breathe life into literature so entrenched in imitation. Sidney urges his readers to ‘stand upon [Roman and Greek] authorities’ and is highly critical of poets who do not work with a classical precedent.<sup>15</sup> Yet he also urges creativity and invention in a poet.<sup>16</sup> For Sidney it is ‘invention’ that takes poetry beyond other arts:

Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any subjection, lifted up with the vigour of his own invention, doth grow in effect into another nature, in making things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as never were in Nature, as the Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies, and such like: so as he goeth hand in hand with Nature, not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts, but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit.<sup>17</sup>

These inventions of the poetic imagination, these things made ‘quite anew’, that are outside of ‘the narrow warrant of [nature’s] gifts’, are the part of poetry that imbue it with pedagogical power. For example, its heroes are,

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Erasmus’ arguments in *Ciceronianus* (1528), see Cave, pp. 35-77; for the debate on imitation between Pietro Bembo and Giovan Francesco Pico, see Martin L. McLaughlin, *Literary Imitation in the Italian Renaissance: The Theory and Practice of Literary Imitation in Italy from Dante to Bembo* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 249-274.

<sup>15</sup> Philip Sidney, *An Apology for Poetry (or The Defence of Poesy)*, ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd; revised and expanded by R. W. Maslen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 83; and for dramatists who ignore classical unities, see pp. 110-12.

<sup>16</sup> For the self-contradictory nature of the *The Defence*, see Catherine Bates, *On Not Defending Poetry: Defence and Indefensibility in Sidney's Defence of Poesy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 10.

<sup>17</sup> Sidney, 2014, p. 85.

unlike the stuff of imperfect reality, capable of unblemished virtue. Their superhuman qualities can inspire virtue in readers in ways that mere reality never can. However, although Sidney describes these forms, born out of ‘the zodiac of [the poet’s] wit’, as the products of ‘invention’ that are created ‘anew’, there is little new about the products described, ‘Heroes, Demigods, Cyclops, Chimeras, Furies’ all being the stuff of classical mythology. Thus the products of the poetic imagination are both new and old simultaneously. Sidney heightens this paradoxical idea of backwards-looking invention with his description of the poet’s ability to transform and improve nature: ‘Her world is brazen, the poets deliver a golden.’<sup>18</sup> Yet as early modern readers knew from Ovid, the order presented here by Sidney is back to front. Wroth and other readers of Ovid knew well that the Golden Age came first.

Aurea prima sata est aetas, quae vindice nullo,  
sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat (I.89-90).<sup>19</sup>

Then sprang up first the golden age, which of itself maintained  
The truth and right of everything unforced and  
unconstrained.<sup>20</sup>

The Golden Age is closely linked to invention coming, in Ovid’s text, directly after the invention of man: ‘Sic, modo quae fuerat rudis et sine imagine,

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<sup>18</sup> Sidney, 2014, p. 85.

<sup>19</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8*, Trans. by Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1916), p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Arthur Golding, *Ovid’s Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 34.

tellus / induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras' (I.87-88).<sup>21</sup> Golding's translation suggests a particularly clear causal relationship. In his translation it is the invention of the human that transforms the earth into a golden world: 'And thus the earth, which late before had neither shape nor hue, / Did take the noble shape of man and was transformèd anew'.<sup>22</sup> Whilst it is possible to translate this passage to describe a piece of earth transformed into a human, Golding's phrasing suggests an ambiguity, allowing not only for the transformation of a piece of earth into man, but a transformation of the whole earth as a result of man's creation. A long description of the beauty of the Golden Age is followed by the Silver Age, and then by the 'brazen age'. Nor is this third age the last, it is followed by the age of iron.<sup>23</sup> While Sidney does not situate his nature in this hopeless Iron Age, his transformation leads the world chronologically backward to the Golden Age. So poesy transforms nature's world into an earlier chronological world that is also a world of newness. The return to a Golden Age also suggests an age of moral superiority and has Edenic connotations. The simultaneous movement chronologically backwards and forwards implicit in the act of creating poetry is summed up in the word 'invention', as it can mean both creation and discovery.<sup>24</sup> Wroth employs this journey backwards and forwards in her interaction with literary authorities, as she looks back to her source material while transforming it into something new.

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<sup>21</sup> Ovid, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Golding, p. 34.

<sup>23</sup> For the Silver Age, see Ovid, I. 113-124, p. 10, and Golding, p. 35; for the Brazen Age, see Ovid, I.125-127, p. 10, and Golding, p. 35; for the Iron Age, see Ovid, I.127-150, pp. 10-12, and Golding, pp. 35-36.

<sup>24</sup> Roland Greene, *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), p. 19.



The journey from imitator-ape to authority through invention is essential to Sidney's exhortation to poets in the *Defence*, because, for Sidney, the poet must be an authority. Despite his self-deprecating identification as a 'paper blurrer' in his *Defence of Poesy*, Sidney is emphatic about the importance of the poet: 'Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*, which is as much as a diviner, foreseer, or prophet'.<sup>25</sup> For Sidney the poet's role is one, like the seer, whose duty was to care for the health of the state or the individual, to advise, and to speak truth, whatever the consequences. The good poet, for Sidney, is also a teacher. Sidney argues that '*praxis* must be the fruit' of poesy.<sup>26</sup> Poetry should teach virtue and drive its students towards action. Sidney argues that Virgil's presentation of Aeneas, for example, will make readers wish to emulate his virtue in a way that a purely factual account could not.<sup>27</sup> The 'delightful proportion' of poetry is essential to produce the 'delightful teaching which is the end of Poesy'.<sup>28</sup> The pleasure of poetry and its delightful inventions create something worthy of imitation (that is authority) both in behaviour and following poetry. Wroth's characterisation of Pamphilia as an exemplary figure suggests a literal and far more earnest approach to the exhortation that poetry should teach and delight in Sidney's *Defence* than its own author ever undertook.

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<sup>25</sup> Sidney, 2014, pp. 109, 83.

<sup>26</sup> Sidney, 2014, p. 94.

<sup>27</sup> Sidney, 2014, p. 99.

<sup>28</sup> Sidney, 2014, pp. 95, 112. Bates notes that this 'Horatian profit-and-pleasure formula' was very popular in the prefaces and introductions of books printed in England from 1560s onwards: Bates (2017), pp. 4-5.

### 2.3 Imitating Bees in Wroth's Sonnet P37

Wroth follows Sidney's lesson in heuristic imitation or *aemulatio*. However, in practice her approach is more conscientious than Sidney's, but with less sense of *sprezzatura*, as Wroth carefully signposts the authority upon which she is drawing, and then twists away from her source. Later in this chapter I will demonstrate this practice in relation to her uncle Sidney's work.

However, before examining Wroth's imitative practice I will look at how she writes about imitation. Like Sidney, Wroth also meditated upon practices of imitation within her sonnets. In sonnet P45, to which I return at the end of the chapter, Wroth follows Sidney's AS3, denouncing 'pleasant wits' (following Sidney's 'dainty wits' in AS3) who revel in their 'owne fram'd words' (echoing Sidney's 'phrases fine') and who have not added their own genius to their poetry.<sup>29</sup> In her sonnet P37, Wroth addresses the role of the imitating poet and her use to society less directly than in P45, but she does so in a manner that clearly interacts with the classical discussions of imitation through her use of the image of the bee. P37 begins 'How fast thou fliest, O Time, on Loves swift wings' and bemoans Time's tendency to slow down and speed up, when least convenient for lovers. Pamphilia, the speaker, urges Time to mend his ways and become more like the Bee:

O slake thy pace, and milder passe to Love,  
Be like the Bee, whose wings she doth but use  
To bring home profit; masters good to prove,  
Laden, and weary, yet againe pursues.

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), P45, pp. 231-232.

So lade thy selfe with hony of sweet joy,  
And do not me (the Hive of Love) destroy.<sup>30</sup>

Though the gender of personified Time is not clear, the Bee is clearly designated female, and is presented as a model of exemplary behaviour for Time to follow.<sup>31</sup> At first glance, the sonnet on the need to imitate the bee owes its imitative debt to Virgil's *Georgics*. Wroth's exemplary bee is modelled closely on those of Virgil. The pattern of behaviour described in the sonnet, of the profitable bee, that comes home with a heavy load only to return to work ('yet againe pursues'), echoes minutely the young bees of the *Georgics*.

Grandaevis oppida curae  
et munire favos et daedala fingere tecta.  
At fessae multa referunt se nocte minores,  
crura thymo plenae; pascuntur et arbuta passim  
et glaucas salices casiamque crocumque rubentem  
et pinguem tiliam et ferrugineos hyacinthos.  
Omnibus una quies operum, labor omnibus unus:

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<sup>30</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P37, pp. 226-227.

<sup>31</sup> The bee can be identified as female through the pronoun 'she'. The bee is using her own wings to 'bring home profit'. The other possibility for 'she' is the figure of Love from the previous line (i.e. Love is using the bee's wings), however, this reading does not work, since the bee is described as serving 'masters' not a mistress. Linda Dove reads Time as a male figure ("Mary Wroth and the Politics of the Household in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. by Mary E. Burke, Jane Donawerth, Linda L. Dove, and Karen Nelson (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000) p. 148), but Time here is not necessarily gendered. Time in Latin ('tempus') is neuter.

mane ruunt portis; nusquam mora; rursus easdem  
Vesper ubi e pastu tandem decedere campis  
admonuit, tum tecta petunt, tum corpora curant. (IV.178-187)

The aged have charge of the towns, the building of the hives, the fashioning of the cunningly wrought houses. But the young bees betake them home in weariness, late at night, their thighs freighted with thyme; far and wide they feed on arbutus, on pale-green willows, on cassia, on ruddy crocus, on the rich linden, and the dusky hyacinth. All have one season to rest from labour, all one season to toil. At dawn they pour from the gates – no loitering again, when the star of eve has warned them to withdraw from their pasture in the fields, then they seek their homes, then they refresh their frames.<sup>32</sup>

Though distilled into a few lines of a sonnet, Wroth's use of Virgil here constitutes a close translation, as not only the conscientious action of the bees, but also Virgil's language is matched as Wroth follows Virgil's 'fessae [...] plenae' with her 'Laden, and weary'. In this imitation of Virgil, Wroth also engages in another preoccupation of early modern Humanists: imitative pedagogy. While Wroth presents the bee as a model for Time, the bees in the *Georgics* were considered to be an exemplar for a productive state. In the extract above, they divide their labour according to their gifts (the old remain in the hive to guard, while the young and strong fly out to gather honey). The bees obey the king yet work cooperatively for the common good. In *Theatre*

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<sup>32</sup> Virgil, "Georgics", *Eclogues, Georgics, Aeneid Books 1-6*, Trans. by H. Rushton Fairclough (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), pp. 230-231.

of *Insects* Thomas Moffett presents the bees as a perfect commonwealth, which, although ruled by a king (the monarch of the hive was considered to be male in this period), gives each bee his role and rejects tyranny.<sup>33</sup> Dove interprets the sonnet as an analogy for the relationship between the king and his commonwealth. The didactic voice of Pamphilia exhorts the king (Time) to follow the example of the bees and their ideal society, in order to save the speaker – ‘the Hive of Love’, representing the commonwealth – from destruction.<sup>34</sup> This reading is plausible, given the associations between the beehive and the commonwealth, but while Wroth did engage in a discussion of appropriate governance (a topic explored in more depth in Chapter 5 of this thesis), her classical allusions here do not end with Virgil, suggesting there may be more going on in this poem.

Wroth’s image of the tiny and useful bee, whose wings are contrasted with those of a much larger bird, also suggests an allusion to Horace’s *Ode* IV.2 in which the bee has a very different meaning. While the idea of the bee community as a political model for the healthy commonwealth may now be their most famous metaphor, in classical literature bees also had a strong connection to ideas of poetic inspiration and imitation, and Wroth’s use of the bee in P37 also engages with this tradition. For the ancient Greeks, the Bee Maidens, who lived, like the Muses, on Parnassus, were tutors and nurses to Apollo, the god of poetry, and could prophesy truthfully when they themselves drank honey. The image of drinking honey to confer eloquence,

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<sup>33</sup> Dove, pp. 148-149. Although the *Theatre of Insects* was published posthumously in 1634 in Latin, and in 1658 in English, and was therefore too late to have been read by Wroth unless she had enjoyed access to the manuscript version, the work does reflect a contemporary political understanding of bees. Moffet enjoyed Mary Sidney’s patronage, so it may be possible that Wroth saw the work.

<sup>34</sup> Dove, pp. 148-149.

poetic skill, or prophetic power persisted throughout ancient literature. Poets including Homer, Hesiod, Pindar, Sophocles, Plato, Menander, Virgil, and Lucan are all depicted in stories as having been nurtured by bees, or having their mouths filled with honey, anointing them as poets. Bees were also known as the birds of the muses.<sup>35</sup> Today the word ‘mellifluous’, meaning sweetness of speech and eloquence is still in common usage, but for later classical, and early modern readers and writers, to be honey-tongued was also to be an imitator. When Shakespeare is called ‘honey-tongued’ it is a reference not only to his skill but his Ovidianism.<sup>36</sup> The bee gathering pollen from flowers became an image associated with drawing on different poetic traditions. For Horace, the type of bee, rather than the flower indicated the chosen poetic tradition. In *Ode* IV.2 Horace identifies himself as the Matine bee:

[...] ego apis Matinae  
 more modoque  
 grata carpentis thyma per laborem  
 plurimum circa nemus uvidique  
 Tiburus ripas operosa parvus  
 carmina fingo. (IV.2.27-32)

I, in manner and method like a Matine bee that with incessant toil sips  
 the lovely thyme around the woods and riverbanks of well-watered  
 Tibur, fashion in a small way my painstaking songs.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Susan Scheinberg, “The Bee Maidens of the Homeric Hymn to Hermes”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 83 (1979), pp. 9, 24.

<sup>36</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> Horace, “Odes”, *Odes and Epodes*, Trans. by Niall Rudd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 222-223.

In this *Ode*, a *recusatio*, the poet excuses himself from writing about Augustus' great deeds, because he is not a Pindaric poet. Ironically, Horace derives his image of the bee as poet from Pindar, but specifies that he is a Matine bee, that is a bee from Apulia (Horace's native countryside).<sup>38</sup> The modest image of this bee, working hard on the banks of the Tiber emphasises the idea of a different kind of poet, who works within a rural – and distinctly Roman – tradition. For Seneca, the type of flower rather than the type of bee ostensibly represents the literary tradition. Seneca uses the image of the bee gathering honey from various different plants to show the way in which the well-read mind gathers honey from its various sources, but then adds to it something of its own:

We should follow, men say, the example of the bees, who flit about and cull the flowers that are suitable for producing honey, and then arrange and assort in their cells all that they have brought in; these bees, as our Vergil says, “pack close the flowing honey, And swell their cells with nectar sweet.” It is not certain whether the juice which they obtain from the flowers forms at once into honey, or whether they change that which they have gathered into this delicious object by blending something therewith and by a certain property of their breath.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Richard F. Thomas, “Commentary on *Odes IV*”, *Horace Odes Book IV and Carmen Saeculare*, ed. by Richard F. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 113-114.

<sup>39</sup> Seneca, “Epistle LXXXIV”, *Epistles, Volume II: Epistles 66-92*, trans. by Richard M. Gummere (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), pp. 277-279; cited in Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), p. 84.

In this image, different flowers represent different sources or authorities drawn upon by the erudite reader, that is, the bee. The bee's breath is that element of genius, the 'natural gifts' of the human mind, that the reader or writer adds to bring originality to this collection of ideas.<sup>40</sup> This model of informed and eclectic imitation, mixed with the poet's own spark of invention, is closely akin to those Sidneian and Horatian models already discussed. The inspirations, taken from each authority (each flower), must be digested by the bee, mixed and metabolised, before it achieves the sweetness of honey. Indeed, Jonson makes this connection himself, linking Horace's exhortation to imitation blended with innovation in the *Ars Poetica* with the Pindaric bees. Jonson urges the poet:

Not, to imitate servilely, as Horace saith, and catch at vices, for  
vertue: but, to draw forth out of the best, and choisest flowers,  
with the Bee, and turne all into Honey, worke it into one relish,  
and savour: make our Imitation sweet: observe, how the best  
writers have imitated, and follow them.<sup>41</sup>

Jonson suggests learning to imitate by imitating other skilled imitators. He is a proponent of mixing authorities, to 'draw forth out of the best, and choisest [sources]' to create a whole. As in Seneca, the sweet honey is not the inspiration here, but the product of the poet's work.

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<sup>40</sup> Seneca, p. 279.

<sup>41</sup> Ben Jonson, "Prose Works (1623): Discoveries", *Ben Jonson, Vol. 8: The Poems; The Prose Works*, ed. by Percy Simpson and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), pp. 638-639.



Wroth's sonnet P37, which urges Time to 'Be like the Bee' also draws to mind this tradition of inspiration, imitation and poetry. Bee-like, Wroth selects images from more than one source. Due to the disparity of size and status, her comparison of 'Eagles wings' (6) with those profitable little wings of the bee (10) recalls Horace's comparison between the large Pindaric swan ('Dircaeum [...] cycnum') and the small Apulian bee. Wroth's bee, like Sidney's definition of what poesy ought to be, teaches (by example) and is both useful and delightful.<sup>42</sup> Her usefulness is emphasised in lines 10 and 11, as her wings are used for nothing else 'but / To bring home profit; masters good to prove'. The delightfulness of the bee's work is communicated in Pamphilia's exhortation to Time: 'So lade thyself with honey of sweet joy'. The bee's load is therefore sweet. Importantly, this line is different in the manuscript version of the sequence, where it reads 'Soe lade thy self with honnye of sought joye'. 'Sought' is replaced with 'sweet' in the 1621 printed edition, preventing the image from being one of personal gratification. This changed image emphasises the objective sweetness, and therefore innate goodness of this joy, rather than a subjective joy that an individual seeks. This adds to the idea that a public good is being discussed.

If Wroth's P37 is signalling an engagement with the ideas of imitative poetry through the image of the bee, what then does the sonnet mean? Understanding the bee as representative of the poet, who teaches and delights, does not negate Dove's reading, mentioned above, which suggests that the sonnet is an allegory for the relationship between the sovereign and

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<sup>42</sup> Ilona Bell notes 'The image of the bee, which brings profit to others, was often used in illustrations of Sidney's motto' in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), p. 110 n.

people, but adds to it. The useful bee is the skilful poet who, drawing on and synthesising useful authorities, can deliver productive poetry and good counsel. The syntactically ambiguous closing couplet, ‘So lade thy selfe with hony of sweet joy, /And do not me (the Hive of Love) destroy’, opens up this double reading. While the bee brings her load to the Hive, and sets out again to fetch more, it is not clear whether Time is invited to come to the Hive laden with joy or leave it laden with joy. Time may be instructed to follow the bee in bringing joy to the Hive (the commonwealth in Dove’s reading). However, the Hive of Love is also the speaker, Pamphilia. Wroth repeatedly presents Pamphilia as a containing object, full of a store of emotion.<sup>43</sup> The Hive is not only a home, or a store, it is productive (the honey is created there). This productivity serves ‘masters’, but Wroth’s use of the word is ambiguous, as it could be plural or singular possessive. Context does not make the reader’s choice clearer: the produce of the Hive is enjoyed not only by its bee king within the Hive but also by the farmer or gardener – a figure with strong connections to that of the sovereign in the early modern imagination – who tends the bees. If Time is leaving the Hive laden with its produce, instead of destroying the Hive, he is invited to take from it, and live symbiotically with its aid. With the image of the beehive as poet, the lesson of the bees, or how the monarch should interact with his commonwealth, is not so radically egalitarian as that imagined by Dove. Time, the monarch, is being invited to remain outside the Hive, as master or gardener, or to lead it as its king, and live in symbiosis with it. Although Time is urged towards productivity, he is not invited to be a mere worker. Wroth imagines the place

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<sup>43</sup> Examples of poems in which the speaker is characterised as a receptacle, store, or tomb include P1, P24, P46, P54, P67, P98, and P100.

of the poet within that commonwealth – a productive Hive that melds multiple authorities into sweet honey for the good of the king and state.<sup>44</sup> This combination of selfless action and assertion of authority would be no means be unique to this depiction of bees. The motto ‘sic vos non vobis’, one of those associated with Philip Sidney, was commonly illustrated by an image of a beehive, and had strong connotations of both these ideas. While the phrase was often deployed to describe selfless acts, like those of bees who labour to create honey for others to enjoy, the phrase is also derived from a story about Virgil asserting the ownership of his work, and his authority over the claims of an incompetent poet named Bathyllus.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.4 Imitating Sidney

One of the flowers that Wroth draws from in mixing the honey of her poetry is the work of her uncle Philip Sidney. In this section I will place three of Wroth’s poems alongside three of Sidney’s in order to demonstrate Wroth’s method of imitation. Gavin Alexander has argued for a proud family resemblance between the works of Philip Sidney and his niece.<sup>46</sup> The works are cleverly referential, but not slavish copies or pastiches. Wroth, in fact is careful, whilst advertising connection and resemblance, not to replicate. This heuristic method of imitation allows Wroth to identify herself as simultaneously a continuation of a Sidneian legacy and an independent authority. Wroth’s *The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania* opens with the

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<sup>44</sup> Dove (p. 145) imagines Wroth as proto-parliamentarian in her aims, whereas Wroth’s mission is to argue for the mixed governance and the inclusion of aristocratic council in rule. This argument is expanded in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>45</sup> Emma Marshall Denkinger, “Some Renaissance References to *Sic Vos Non Vobis*”, *Philological Quarterly*, 10 (1931), p. 151.

<sup>46</sup> Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Response to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 288-300.

lament of Urania, a supposed shepherdess who has just discovered that she is a foundling of unknown origin. Although her royal birth will soon be discovered, Urania cries out her complaint to 'Rocks', 'Hills', 'Meadows' and 'to Springs', and it is quickly returned to her.

Unseene, unknowne, I here alone complaine  
To Rock's, to Hills, to Meadows, and to Springs,  
Which can no helpe return to ease my pain,  
But back my sorrowes the sad Eccho brings.  
Thus increasing are my woes to me,  
Doubly resounded by that monefull voice,  
Which seems to second me in miserie.<sup>47</sup>

This opening reference to Ovid's 'Echo and Narcissus' also concerns the heritage of the poet. As niece to Sir Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, and daughter to Robert Sidney (also a poet) Wroth was faced with the problem of how to 'second' them in poetry. This reference to Ovid's Echo allows Wroth to explore the difficulties inherent in the role of the following or imitating poet. Wroth's prose romance, named to follow her uncle's, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, begins with a character named

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<sup>47</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, pp. 1-2. Wroth's verse refers to Echo in her Ovidian context. Urania's complaint 'To Rock's, to Hills, to Meadows, and to Springs' alludes to Echo's mournful haunting of woodland places: 'spreta latet silvis pudibundaque frondibus ora / protegit et solis ex illo vivit in antris', Ovid, III.393-394, p. 152; 'Now when she saw herself thus mocked, she gat her to the woods / And hid her head for shame among the leaves and buds; / And ever since she lives alone in hollow dens and caves.' Golding, p. 107. A similar allusion is made at the start of Shakespeare's 'A Lover's Complaint' and in Sidney's echo poem in *Arcadia*.

in that work, the lost shepherdess Urania. Wroth's Urania makes reference to Echo, an imitator, in the poem she recites. As Maureen Quilligan argues, this reference to Ovid's imitator twinned with a character named in Sidney's work, suggests that Wroth is some sort of Echo of Sidney's.<sup>48</sup> However, Wroth's reference to Echo, and her pointed omission of an echo-poem structure, points out a profound difference, at the same time as 'an uncanny resemblance' between this work and those of her uncle as Quilligan describes.<sup>49</sup> Alexander reads the appearance of the eponymous foundling at the opening of the *Urania* as a declaration that Wroth's work will be 'revisionist rather than imitative'.<sup>50</sup> There is evidence of a relationship between the work of Sidney and that of his niece, but what that relationship will be is unclear: 'we do not know if the text itself is to be the offspring of the Sidneys or a foundling separated from its family.'<sup>51</sup> Through the conjunction of this foundling that shares the name of Sidney's lost child and a reference to an echo, Wroth acknowledges her potential role as an echo – that is as an imitator and translator of Sidney's message for a new age. At the same time, by refusing to engage in the echo-poem structure, she rejects the negative characteristics of the Ovidian version of Echo, whom he presents as a thoughtless and partial imitator, whose deviations from the original are not heuristic but accidental. Wroth does not put her female speaker (here, Urania) in the role of an answering voice, but presents her as the voice that will be answered. Though named to recall her uncle's work, the prose romance and sonnet sequence are by no means empty mistranslations of

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<sup>48</sup> Maureen Quilligan, *Incest and Agency in Elizabeth's England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 311.

<sup>49</sup> Quilligan, p. 194.

<sup>50</sup> Alexander, p. 290.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander, p. 290.

their Sidneian forerunners; her deviations and subversions are by design as Wroth engages in a process of heuristic imitation.

Quilligan's notion of 'uncanny' resemblance' between Wroth's *Urania* and Sidney's romance is astute. She has identified a tension between simultaneous familiarity and unfamiliarity, and an unreliable strangeness. Here I will extend Quilligan's argument about *Urania* to identify a similar relationship between Wroth's sonnet sequence and Sidney's. Wroth deploys the familiar (that is, familiar to readers of Sidney's poetry) in an unfamiliar context throughout *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. By comparing the opening sonnets of Wroth's sequence with her uncle's, *Astrophil and Stella*, I will show this 'uncanny' resemblance at work. The two poems are both fourteen-line sonnets, but apart from the generic similarity of introductory poems, in which both poets explain the mythology behind the poet's choice to write (or lack thereof), and the shared subject of love, there is, at first glance, little that is similar about the two pieces. Sidney's aetiological sonnet masquerades as an emotional struggle, and while intricately punning, reads like a spontaneous expression of frustration. The domestic imagery of parenthood and corporal discipline creates an almost colloquial feel despite the poem's ornate structure. In contrast, the myth behind Wroth's speaker is delivered in a classical, formal, and heavily allusive dream narrative. Where Astrophil discovers something supposedly native to his heart, Pamphilia's flaming poet's heart is the product of a violent, outside intervention. Despite these differences, there are significant if subtle similarities, communicating some 'uncanny' or untrustworthy familiarity. Both share an ABAB opening rhyme

scheme.<sup>52</sup> Wroth, however, plays with and makes strange this similarity. In the next four lines, she inverts Sidney's pattern: while Sidney's runs ABAB in the second quatrain, Wroth creates a BABA rhyme. In the last six lines Wroth diverges further still (Sidney CDCDEE, Wroth CCDEEF (or CCDEED depending on pronunciation of 'beene')), completing a journey from resemblance, through inversion, to originality. There is also a degree of shared diction, as both poets use 'black'/'blackest', 'burn'd'/'burning', 'love'/'loving'/'lover', 'child'/'son', and 'heart', and both also include a mother figure ('Venus' in Wroth, 'Nature' and 'step-dame Study' in Sidney). However, as is clear below where I have marked diction shared by both sonnets in bold print, Wroth does not in any sense stick slavishly to Sidney's language.

#### AS 1

**Loving** in truth, and fain in verse my **love** to show,  
That she (dear she) might take some pleasure of my pain;  
Pleasure might cause her read, reading might make her know;  
Knowledge might pity win, and pity grace obtain;  
I sought fit words to paint the **blackest** face of woe,  
Studying inventions fine her wits to entertain,  
Oft turning others' leaves, to see if thence would flow  
Some fresh and fruitful showers upon my sun**burnt** brain.  
But words came halting forth, wanting invention's stay;  
Invention, nature's **child**, fled step-dame Study's blows;  
And others' feet still seemed but strangers in my way.  
Thus great with **child** to speak, and helpless in my throes,  
Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite,  
'Fool,' said my Muse to me, 'look in thy **heart**, and write.'

#### P1

When night's **blacke** Mantle could most darknesse prove,  
And sleepe (deaths Image) did my senses hyre,  
From Knowledge of my selfe, then thoughts did move  
Swifter then those, most swiftnesse neede require.  
In sleepe, a Chariot drawne by wing'd Desire,  
I saw; where sate bright *Venus* Queene of Love,  
And at her feete her **Sonne**, still adding Fire  
To **burning hearts**, which she did hold above,  
But one **heart** flaming more then all the rest,  
The Goddess held, and put it to my breast,  
Deare **Sonne** now shut, said she, thus must we winne;  
He her obeyd, and martyr'd my poore heart.  
I waking hop'd as dreames it would depart,  
Yet since, O me, a Lover I have beene.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Philip Sidney, *Sir Philip Sidney: The Major Works*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 151. Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P1, p.

Both poets end with the image of the heart as the seat of their poetry. For Sidney, the muse directs Astrophil to 'look in thy heart and write' (14). Instead of following 'other's feet' (11), his heart is where he will find the inspiration for his work. Similarly the heart is also the source of inspiration in Wroth's sonnet. At the start of Wroth's sequence a heart that will designate her a lover and a poet is implanted into Pamphilia's breast. In contrast to Sidney's speaker, Wroth's does not need a muse to tell her to turn her attention towards her heart. Her transformation is instantaneous: 'Yet since, O me, a Lover I have beene' (14). In both poems the metamorphosis into poet is painful: as Astrophil is seen 'biting [his] truant pen and beating [him]self for spite' (13), Pamphilia's 'poore heart' is 'martyrd' (12). These sonnets exhibit the masochistic themes that run through both sequences, and, in both these opening sonnets, the moment of extreme pain comes directly before a realisation in the final line.<sup>54</sup> Though structurally the volta comes in line 12 in AS1 and in line 13 in Wroth's P1, for both the real moment of change comes only with the final line.

Alexander's comparison of Wroth's sonnet P16 to AS47 continues his argument that Wroth wishes to demonstrate a resemblance to Sidney in a poem that then goes on to take a new and different course. Alexander identifies an inverted rhyme scheme, echoes of rhetorical techniques, and similarities in theme: 'Wroth does more than enough to establish Sidney's

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205. I have altered the layout of these two poems in order to place them side by side for comparison.

<sup>54</sup> The theme of martyrdom in Wroth's work can be seen as a transformation of Sidney's motif of pleasure in pain into one of religious suffering. For a treatment of masochistic desire in *Astrophil and Stella* see Catherine Bates, "Masochism in *Astrophil and Stella*", *Masculinity, Gender, and Identity in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 28-88.



sonnet as her inspiration – she even ends the poem with the word from which Sidney’s embarks at the end of his first line: ‘liberty’. But her poem has its own themes.<sup>55</sup> Light-touch connections, in which Sidney provides some inspiration, but not a strict model, are common. Of the 103 poems in the sequence, Josephine Roberts identifies 30 as displaying direct references to Sidney’s work, and there are arguably more than these.<sup>56</sup> However, these references are subtle: images, phrases, or ideas, are picked up and developed, but the sequences do not map onto one another, nor is any sonnet followed fully. Interestingly Wroth does closely model some poems on works by her father, Robert Sidney, which Alexander suggests is a ‘private tribute’ for the recognition of close family and friends, as Robert Sidney’s work remained in manuscript and was not widely circulated.<sup>57</sup> However, when it came to her famous uncle’s writing, Wroth took samples of Sidney, and transformed them into something suitable to her own purposes.

For example, Roberts notes Wroth’s reference to the opening of AS67, ‘Hope, art thou true, or dost thou flatter me?’; in the first two lines of sonnet P31 Wroth’s speaker also questions hope, ‘Fie tedious Hope, why doe you still rebell? / Is it not yet enough you flatter’d me’.<sup>58</sup> What is truly interesting here is the different direction in which Wroth takes her sonnet. While Sidney’s sonnet begins by asking whether or not Hope is flattering, Wroth’s speaker has already moved beyond this quandary. In Wroth’s version of the address, Hope is a proven traitor from the beginning. The similarity between the two poems continues with the image of the speaker as the ruin of a conquered

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<sup>55</sup> Alexander, pp. 291-293.

<sup>56</sup> Josephine A. Roberts *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. by Josephine A. Roberts (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992).

<sup>57</sup> Alexander, p. 293.

<sup>58</sup> Roberts, 1992, p. 102.

town. Astrophil hopes that Stella will look with 'piteous eye' on the 'ruines' wrought by 'her conquest' of him, and be merciful 'before all wracked be' (AS67, 2-4).<sup>59</sup> For Pamphilia in sonnet P31, the wrack and ruin caused by Hope is complete; Wroth's speaker describes herself as a 'Towne [...] won' by 'plotted slight' that has been 'ruin'd' by 'fire' (P31, 9, 11).<sup>60</sup> Again, Wroth follows the same pattern of making a clear reference to a Sidney model, but, instead of closely echoing it, she takes another course.

Wroth's new direction also seems to imply a moral judgement or improvement upon Sidney's. Sidney's sonnet is all about bad translation and wilful misunderstanding, self-presentations that Wroth neither desires, nor can afford. Astrophil allows Hope to do his translating for him:

Her eyes' speech is translated thus by thee:

But fail'st thou not in phrase so heavenly-high?

Look on again, the fair text better try;

What blushing notes dost thou in margin see? (AS67, 5-8)

Astrophil cannot quite believe this excellent diagnosis ('But fail'st thou not'), asks for another interpretation of her facial expression – 'the fair text' – and looks for further evidence in blushes (Stella's cheeks are likened to the extensive marginal notes that were common in early modern books to guide the reader's interpretation) and sighs, that might indicate unspoken thoughts. While Astrophil continues to question Hope's reading ('Hast thou found such, and such-like arguments? / Or art thou else to comfort me

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<sup>59</sup> Sidney, 2008, p. 180.

<sup>60</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P31, p. 223.

forsworn?’ (10-11)), he is willing to accept it. Sidney makes clear that it is Astrophil who is behind this false reading. Astrophil may question the evidence presented, asking for more; however, he is aware that Hope is a flatterer, which indicates Hope is reinforcing Astrophil’s bad judgements rather than originating a mistranslation of the signs in Stella’s face. Rather than seeking supporting evidence from her sighs and blushes, Astrophil is instructing Hope to find evidence to support the claim that Stella is piteous wherever he can. At the same time as Hope is being apostrophised as an external figure, this personification is undercut by the fact that, as a series of commands and questions from the speaker to Hope reveal, it is not in fact Hope, but Astrophil who is driving this misinterpretation. Hope is not, even within the conceit of the poem, an external enemy, but part of Astrophil. In negating the expected disavowal of Hope, Sidney’s Astrophil negates any moral superiority gained in its imagined separation from his ‘self’. Sidney’s sonnet is about wilful ignorance, suggested throughout, but revealed at the volta:

Well, how so thou interpret their contents,  
I am resolved thy error to maintain,  
Rather than by more truth to get more pain (AS67, 12-14).

Sidney presents Astrophil as comfortable with the pleasurable but false interpretations that Hope has made, or in fact, that he has lead Hope to make.

In Wroth’s treatment of the struggle with Hope, the paradoxical separation of Hope from the self is heightened rather than collapsed. Where

Sidney's sonnet shows his speaker colluding with Hope, Wroth's Pamphilia refuses to do so. Not only does she refuse to collude with Hope, but she asserts that she was a difficult figure to deceive. Hope wins Pamphilia over by means both natural ('cunning') and supernatural ('a spell') (3). Pamphilia declares: 'No Towne was won by a more plotted slight, / Then I by you' (9). Hope could not have conquered Pamphilia by fair means, and was forced to use an arsenal of deceit, cunning and magic. Despite the complete ruin brought about by this devious infiltration, Pamphilia is also transformed into an exemplary figure as she becomes a monument to be seen, or text to be read (as Stella's face was) as line 10 continues 'who may my fortune write, / In embers of that fire which ruin'd me'. This conquest and ruin, however, is in the past tense. Pamphilia now holds Hope as her prisoner:

Thus Hope your falshood calls you to be tryde,  
You'r loth, I see, the tryall to abide;  
Prove true at last, and gaine your liberty (12-14).

To 'gaine [its] liberty' Hope must 'prove true', therefore this is not a trial of past misdeeds (Hope seems to have been undoubtedly guilty in the past), but a judgement dependent on future events. Hope is 'loth [...] to abide' this examination but this does not sway Pamphilia's judgement. The sonnet ends with its speaker as mistress of Hope (who is not at liberty), and therefore of herself. This creates a strong contrast to Astrophil's willing self-delusion in Sidney's address to Hope.

While Alexander suggests that Wroth does not take Sidney's sonnet as a model to follow closely because she does not believe she can better him, her

motivation is in fact the opposite. Wroth transforms the address to Hope into an opportunity to teach virtue. Wroth's abandonment of the Sidney model is a rejection of its moral laxity. Her intention is to better Sidney; whether or not she succeeds is another matter.

Wroth deploys a similar strategy of moral remodelling through heuristic imitation when, in sonnet P43, she draws inspiration from AS96.<sup>61</sup> Following Philip Sidney's example, in which Astrophil addresses 'Thought', comparing it to 'night' (AS96, 1), Pamphilia compares herself to Night, declaring 'Never could'st thou finde fitter company / For thine owne humour, then I thus opprest' (3-4).<sup>62</sup> Wroth's opening line rhymes with the final couplet of Sidney's sonnet ('rest / [...] detest' (13-14)). Again, Wroth begins by following the same rhyme scheme as her uncle. Both sonnets begin with an ABBA rhyme scheme, repeated in the following four lines. After this point, Wroth begins to depart from Sidney's pattern:

Sidney A B B A C D C E F F

Wroth A B B A C C D E E D

In both poems, the comparison between the self (with Thought as metonymy for the self) and Night is expressed visually, by 'livery' in Sidney (2), and 'Darke' in Wroth (2). Wroth follows Sidney into a mention of lack of light: Sidney's 'Night barred from sun, thou from thy own sun's light' (4), is answered by Wroth's 'If thou beest dark, my wrongs still unredrest / Saw never light' (5-6). Both poets continue a justification of their similarity to

<sup>61</sup> Also identified in Roberts, 1992, p. 109.

<sup>62</sup> Sidney, 2008, p. 205. Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P43, pp. 230-231.

night by itemising and drawing parallels. Wroth's comparisons with night are measured: Pamphilia is 'Darke, heavy, sad' and without 'hope of quiet rest' (2,8). Sidney too, describes Thought as 'darkened', suffering from 'Heaviness', and Wroth's prosaic 'sad' seems to be derived from Sidney's 'Thy tears express night's native moisture right' (3,6,8). Sidney, however, goes further and describes a torturous and demonic struggle in Astrophil's mind, 'In night, of sprites the ghastly powers stir, / In thee, or sprites, or sprited ghastliness' (10-11). Astrophil is unsure whether his thoughts are infested with sprites, or merely sprite-like.

While sprite might in some contexts be holy (i.e. the Holy Spirit, or the spirit of an individual) these sprites are ghastly, and expectedly so as they are in the realm of night. Thomas Nashe in *The Terrors of the Night* wrote that 'The Night is the Divells Blacke book', 'the daughter of hell', where souls are undefended: 'When hath the divell commonly first appeared unto anie man but in the night?'<sup>63</sup> These sprites are devils and Astrophil cannot even be sure if he is possessed. Sidney's use of the word 'ghastly' is a suggestive choice, as in early modern use it is a strong and vivid word, meaning 'Suggestive of the kind of horror evoked by the sight of death or carnage; horrible, frightful, shocking'.<sup>64</sup> Night, and like it, Astrophil's thought, is sepulchral and nightmarish; it is full of gory visions and demons, and so its 'native moisture' can now be read as reflective of the belief that the dew of night is poisonous. Nashe writes that the spirits of night can sometimes appear as vapours, and are spirits 'of water' which cause hallucinations, 'for they feeding on foggie-

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<sup>63</sup> Thomas Nashe, *The Terrors of the Night or, A Discourse of Apparitions* (London: John Danter for William Jones, 1594), sigs. Br, BIIv, BIIIv.

<sup>64</sup> "ghastly | gastly, adj." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, September 2016. Web. 21 September 2016.

braind melancholly, engender thereof many uncouth terrible monsters', and it is hard to know what is real as the combination of night and melancholy 'engendreth many mishapen objects in our imaginations.'<sup>65</sup> These terrible, night time sprites were often harnessed by witches, who, like the Devil, populated Nashe's vision of the night.<sup>66</sup> The poisonous dew of night makes an appearance in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (performed 1606 or 1607, so it is a play Wroth might have seen) when the despairing Enobarbus begs: 'The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me' as he seeks to die.<sup>67</sup> Thus Astrophil's tears become poison, but Sidney concludes that Night fares better than thought, because at least in night there is some rest.

In Wroth's P43 the result of the similarity between Pamphilia and Night is rather different. Pamphilia calls upon Night to 'joine' with her in 'friendship' and concludes:

Silence and grieve, with thee I best doe love.

And from you three I know I cannot move,

Then let us live companions without strife (12-14).

Wroth's speaker takes a Neo-stoic stance on her misfortunes.<sup>68</sup> Pamphilia greets her fate with acceptance and calm. Her peaceful existence with Silence, Grief, and Night, paints the four as perhaps virtuous ladies, living 'without

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<sup>65</sup> Nashe, sig. CIIIv.

<sup>66</sup> Nashe, sigs. BIIr, CIIr-CIIIv.

<sup>67</sup> William Shakespeare, "Antony and Cleopatra", *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 4.10.12.

<sup>68</sup> I argue for a link between Wroth's poetry and Neo-stoic ideologies in Chapter 5.

strife'. It is no surprise that Wroth does not follow Sidney into his flirtation with the demonic. As a woman, especially as a writing woman, Wroth was far more vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft, therefore Pamphilia's recurring association with night is carefully managed in the sequence.<sup>69</sup> James I's obsession with witchcraft was well known, and in his *Daemonologie* he states that witches were slaves of the Devil; it was also commonly believed that the Devil would meet those with whom he wished to compact at night.<sup>70</sup> As considered in the first chapter of this thesis, female disobedience was often associated with witchcraft.<sup>71</sup> Pamphilia is a lover like Astrophil, yet she is also an example of virtue, therefore Wroth's work does not emulate the playful moral ambivalence that can be found in Sidney's sonnets, but her *aemulatio* transfers the themes of her uncle's work into the *mundus significans* of the Protestant, aristocratic woman in the reign of James I.

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<sup>69</sup> For the connection between women writers and promiscuity in popular opinion, see section 1.2.

<sup>70</sup> James Stuart, *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, diuided into three books* (Edinburgh: Robert Walde-graue printer to the Kings Majestie, 1597), p. 9; Nashe, sig. BIIIv.

<sup>71</sup> Orgel, p.110. According to Frances Bacon's records of the 1615 trial of Frances Howard, Countess of Somerset (a woman who had been even more secure in social position and royal favour than Wroth, as the wife of the king's favourite), she and her servant Mrs Turner were repeatedly accused of witchcraft and bewitchment. Though the charge was the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, the women were met with unrelated accusations. Mrs Turner is described as 'a Whore, a Bawd, a Sorcerer, a Murtherer, a Witch, a Papist, a Felone, the daughter of the Devil'. The Earl of Somerset, though accused of the same crime was not suspected of witchcraft. The Lord Chief Justice asserted that he was under the Countess' spell, and acted because he was 'bewitched with the love of the Countesse'. The strikingly beautiful Frances Howard was a fascinating figure for Jacobean society; her divorce and her remarriage, seemingly driven by her desire – although the politicking of her uncle had a lot to do with it – placed her outside the norms of patriarchal control, making her vulnerable to accusations of witchcraft. The case illustrates the double standard in Jacobean accusations of witchcraft in a case that would have had a great impact on Wroth's life, and a warning for any woman who did not conform to convention. Francis Bacon *et al*, *A true and historical relation of the poysoning of Sir Thomas Overbury with the severall arraignments and speeches of those that were executed there upon: also, all the passages concerning the divorce between Robert, late Earle of Essex, and the Lady Frances Howard: with King James's and other large speeches collected out of the papers of Sir Francis Bacon* (London: T.M. & A.C. for John Benson and John Playford, 1651), pp. 54, 21.



## 2.5 Echo, Narcissus, and Imitation

The swerve that Wroth makes as an heuristic imitator is an assertion of authority. This move not only opens the woman writer to the charge of appropriating male ground, but she is also vulnerable to being characterised, not as someone who has alluded to, or played with her sources, but as someone who has misunderstood and disfigured them.<sup>72</sup> This section examines how Wroth confronted the anxiety about being perceived as a bad imitator through her engagement with the figure of Echo from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Echo was a compelling character for Renaissance thinkers because theirs was a culture so concerned with the practices and problems of imitation. Within this tradition, Echo was an ambivalent figure, often emblematic of both the potential and pitfalls of being an imitator. On the one hand, Echo can represent resistance to, and disruption of, authority. On the other, Echo is very often evocative of the mindless ape who replies without meaning and distorts without purpose. The figure of Echo was particularly problematic for women writers because, as Heather Dubrow argues, for male Renaissance Humanists, Echo became a figure onto whom they displaced their anxieties about imitation: "That story, like so many narratives in the mythologies of gender, deflects the behaviour of fear within themselves on to a woman."<sup>73</sup> The anxieties inherent in a culture so grounded in imitation were displaced, disassociated from masculinity, and embodied in a female figure of Echo.<sup>74</sup> In her careful self-fashioning as an heuristic imitator, and therefore

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<sup>72</sup> I discuss appropriate forms for women writers in chapter 1 of this thesis. For the playfulness implicit in the meaning and etymology of *allusio* see Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 10.

<sup>73</sup> Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 91.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Greene discusses the anxieties of an imitative culture, pp. 30-35.

an authoritative writer, the image of the Ovidian Echo was exactly what Wroth sought to avoid.<sup>75</sup>

In her sonnet sequence, Wroth firmly points out that her poetic voice is no simple Echo. In this way Wroth differentiated her authorial identity from the figure of Echo, who, for the early modern reader of Ovid, represented babblers, tell-tales, and those who speak with ‘no substance’.<sup>76</sup> A Renaissance Echo is totally dependent on another’s voice, repeats empty and at the same time mars the meaning of the original. Not only does Echo have no choice but to repeat what had gone before but, as is noted in Regius’ 1513 commentary on Ovid’s text, she misrepresents what she has heard. Regius gives an example of Echo’s deceptive nature in her responses to Narcissus’ invitation to meet:

“Huc coeamus” let us join up here, in this place; Echo repeats the same word but not with the same meaning. For “Coire” means “to join”, both in the sense of “to meet together” and “to copulate” and Echo repeats in the latter sense.<sup>77</sup>

When Echo repeats only the last word of Narcissus’ polite offer, it becomes a bawdy invitation. This manipulation of her source material might present

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<sup>75</sup> Mary Moore identifies Wroth’s reference to Echo as evidence that ‘she depicts female self-representation as problematic’: Mary B. Moore, “The Labyrinth as Style in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*”, *Studies in English Literature*, 38, 1 (1998), p. 110. Jami Ake’s reading of Echo and Narcissus as ‘bad’ poets in Wroth’s poetry (in which Echo is read as the thoughtless imitator) is a forerunner of my own; however, Ake’s reading of Narcissus is different and Ake does not engage with the Latin text: Jami Ake, “Mary Wroth’s Willow Poetics: Revising Female Desire in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*”, *Crossing Boundaries: Issues of Cultural and Individual Identity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Sally McKee (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 140-143.

<sup>76</sup> Ann Moss, *Latin Commentaries on Ovid from the Renaissance*, trans. Ann Moss (Tennessee: Library of Renaissance Humanism, 1998), pp. 96, 155.

<sup>77</sup> Moss, pp. 52-53.

Echo as a sad figure of frustrated desires, but there is enormous comic potential here too. The potential for comedy or ridicule in the figure of Echo is illustrated in Book 1 of the *Urania*. Amphilanthus meets a dwarf called Nainio, who has been exiled from his home in Stromboli on pain of death for resisting slavery and mockery. Amphilanthus finds Nainio's terror entertaining, and is even more entertained by the way his sons mirror him:

The King smil'd to heare his discourse, but most to see his  
action, which was so timerous and affrighted, as never any  
man beheld the like; and as he did, so did his Sons, like  
Munkeys, who imitating one another answerd in gestures as  
aptly as one Eccho to another, and as like, and so the sport was  
doubled. Great delight did hee take in these little men.<sup>78</sup>

While some of Amphilanthus' mirth is inspired by the stature of Nainio, what 'double[s]' 'the sport' is the way in which his sons imitate him exactly. They are likened to 'Munkeys' and 'Eccho[s]', and the two words function synonymously, depicting the dwarf sons as mindless imitators whose empty actions are highly entertaining. Echo is also linked to dwarves in Abraham Fraunce's 1592 work *The Third Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch* in which she is referred to as 'the prating Dandiprat Eccho.'<sup>79</sup> Dandiprat indicates both a lack of importance, and also small stature, as it means small or contemptible person, or dwarf or pigmy.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Wroth, *Urania 1*, p. 138, Scholar Press facsimile, p. 114.

<sup>79</sup> Abraham Fraunce, *The Third Part of the Countess of Pembroke's Ivychurch* (London: Thomas Orwyn, 1592), fol. 15r.

<sup>80</sup> "dandiprat, n." *OED Online* (Oxford University Press: 2018), [www.oed.com/view/Entry/47147](http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/47147), Accessed 4 May 2018.

In William Caxton's 1480 translation of the Ovid and Narcissus tale from *Metamorphoses* Echo's loss of voice is described thus: 'She was a jangleress and a speaker, but she may not begin now any reason, and if any had spoken a word she would resound the end of the word emprised'. In the notes to this section the editors define 'jangleress' as 'female chatterer, idle talker'.<sup>81</sup> This description is consonant with the way in which other commentaries describe Echo. Here, where Caxton describes Echo's fate only to repeat, Caxton uses the word 'reason' for speech. Though glossed as 'speech', which was a contemporary usage of the word, there is also an implication here of argument, thought and reasoning. In the OED entry for reason as speech, Caxton himself is quoted: 'Yf one begynne to resonne and talke with yow of suche mater, lete hym alone.' The use of both 'resonne' and 'talk' here together, suggests that the author did not use them synonymously. Through his choice of 'reason' Caxton implies that Echo's mind is also in some way affected by the change. There is a suggestion that her reason follows, as well as her voice. Caxton is once again emphatic that Echo's following voice is indicative of a following mind, when, in the explanation to the tale he writes 'Echo ne reasoneth any man but that other first reason her'.<sup>82</sup>

As well as an unskilled imitator, Echo is also a worrying figure in terms of morality. Ever the bad imitator, she has followed behaviour that is inappropriate to her. As Bate discusses in his treatment of *Venus and Adonis* and Shakespeare's debt to various of the female figures from

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<sup>81</sup> Caxton, "Echo and Narcissus from *Ovyde Hys Book of Metamorhose* (1480)", *Ovid in English, 1480-1625: Part I: Metamorphoses*, ed. by Sarah Annes Brown, Andrew Taylor (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013) p. 21.

<sup>82</sup> Caxton, p. 22.

*Metamorphoses*, Salmacis, the female watching from the bushes, desiring a male object of affection, transgresses Elizabethan sexual norms.

Shakespeare's Venus and Ovid's Salmacis take on a masculine subject position when they watch, desire, and pursue.<sup>83</sup> The same can be said of Echo, who desires and pursues Narcissus. This is a gender ideology that Wroth does not seek to destabilise. While Pamphilia does engage in quests, she does not pursue men, like her less virtuous counterpart, Nereana.<sup>84</sup> In Caxton's allegorical explanation of the tale, he tells his reader that 'Echo signifieth good renomee', that is good reputation, which 'covereth and hideth all [...] malice' and allows malefactors to avoid detection and punishment.<sup>85</sup> Juno comes out of this allegorical interpretation well, as one who cuts through such deceptions.

Dubrow in her study of women's voices in Petrarchan and anti-Petrarchan poetry, and Enterline and Jonathan Goldberg in their examinations of the figure in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, have made persuasive arguments for Echo representing a powerful, female counter-discourse, destabilizing authority, and undermining the very idea of a fixed meaning.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 61. Thomas Peend's 1565 verse rendering of the tale of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis illustrates this point. Peend's version of the tale is followed by a much longer commentary on the moral lessons of the story. Peend states that Hermaphroditus represents innocent young men who have not yet come into contact with vice; Salmacis represents 'each vice that moveth one to ill' (lines 171-183). The innocent young man is polluted by the woman. Peend argues that men lose their 'nature clean' and become 'effeminate' when they enter the 'filthy, loathsome lake / Of lust' (lines 214, 216-217). The commentary continues with a catalogue of lustful women – including Echo – who have wrought or been lead to destruction by their male beauty and other more perverse leanings (lines 221-317). Peend, "The Pleasant Fable of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis (1565)", *Ovid in English, 1480-1625: Part I: Metamorphoses*, ed. by Sarah Annes Brown, Andrew Taylor (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013) pp. 82, 83-86

<sup>84</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, pp. 192-194, Scolar Press facsimile, pp. 161-163.

<sup>85</sup> Caxton, "Echo and Narcissus from *Ovyde Hys Book of Metamorphose* (1480)", *Ovid in English, 1480-1625: Part I: Metamorphoses*, ed. by Sarah Annes Brown, Andrew Taylor (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013), p. 22.

<sup>86</sup> Dubrow, introducing the Echo as a disruptive voice, pp. 1-14, and on Stella's 'limited' power and counterdiscourse, pp. 115-117. Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to*

Of Echo and the other female figures of *Metamorphoses*, Enterline writes that ‘being a woman in Ovid’s poem means to embody the principle of resistance.’<sup>87</sup> But resistance to what? In Enterline’s and Goldberg’s readings of Echo, she represents a resistance to violent, masculine subjectivity, and bound up with that subjectivity, the very possibility of fixed meaning. If Wroth were to take on this Echo identity – the embodiment of resistance – what would be the equivalent of that masculine subjectivity and meaning? Surely the white, male, colonial subjectivity that Roland Greene reads Sidney constructing through Astrophil. This sort of resistance is not useful to Wroth. The careful authority that Wroth constructs for herself, as she proclaims on the frontispiece of her 1621 publication, is reliant on that patriarchal Sidney authority. Therefore, characterising herself as a resistant and destabilising Echo would undermine the links Wroth is at pains to create through allusions to Sidney’s work. The idea of the resistant Echo (described by Dubrow, Enterline, and Goldberg) is far closer to the ‘dialectical imitation’ that Thomas Greene describes, and that Bate labels as ‘aggressive’, than the heuristic imitation that Wroth makes performative in her poetry.<sup>88</sup> The figure of a subversive and powerful Echo would have been of no more use to Wroth than the aimless and foolish Echo; both tropes are at odds with her careful method of heuristic imitation.

Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* became a focus for many early modern writers interested in the problems of imitation.<sup>89</sup> Wroth too uses this text, in

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*Shakespeare*, pp. 44-45, 84. Jonathan Goldberg, *Voice Terminal Echo* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 12.

<sup>87</sup> Enterline, *The Rhetoric of the Body*, p. 32.

<sup>88</sup> Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p. 32; Thomas Greene, p. 45.

<sup>89</sup> Raphael Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567-1632* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 2.

particular the tale of Echo and Narcissus, to discuss the relationship between imitator and authority, and it is through these figures that Wroth explores what it is to be a good poet. In P97 ‘Juno still jealous of her husband Jove’, the sensation that Pamphilia speaks from within the pastoral world of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* becomes even more pronounced as Wroth casts Pamphilia in the role of an observer in an Ovidian plot:

Juno still jealous of her husband Jove,  
Descended from above, on earth to try,  
Whether she there could find his chosen Love,  
Which made him from the Heav’ns so often flye.

Close by the place where I for shade did lye,  
She chasing<sup>90</sup> came, but when she saw me move,  
Have you not seene this way (said she) to hye  
One, in whom vertue never grownde did prove?

Hee, in whom Love doth breed, to stirre more hate,  
Courting a wanton Nymph for his delight;  
His name is Jupiter, my Lord, by Fate,  
Who for her, leaves Me, Heaven, his Throne, and light.

I saw him not (said I) although heere are

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<sup>90</sup> In Bell’s 2017 edition, which I use throughout this thesis, ‘chasing’ is transcribed as ‘chafing’. There is some ambiguity due to the long s. Salzman’s edition transcribes this as ‘chasing’. Chasing is the more convincing reading because Juno is pursuing her husband with the intent to catch him, therefore I have made a substitution here. Roberts’ text reads ‘chaseing’, p. 139.

Many, in whose hearts, Love hath made like warre.<sup>91</sup>

The Juno that Pamphilia meets is not an oppressive or ridiculous character, but another constant, wronged woman, serving as a mirror to Pamphilia and other heroines of the *Urania*. Like Pamphilia, Juno has no choice but to love; Jove is her 'Lord by fate'. With her dry response to Juno's questioning, the speaker encourages a parallel to be made between their conditions. Roberts suggests several passages from the *Metamorphoses* on which Wroth might have modelled this episode: the stories of Io in Book I, Callisto in Book II, and Semele in Book III.<sup>92</sup> All of these stories are concerned with Jupiter's infidelities on earth. Of these, the most likely model for Wroth's sonnet is the story of Io. Jupiter is being unfaithful, this time with Io, and to disguise his infidelity he covers the world in a mist so that Juno cannot see what he is up to from heaven. Not to be thwarted Juno comes down from heaven and confronts him. Meanwhile Jove has turned his lover into a beautiful heifer to disguise her. Ovid describes how Juno, seeing the clouds covering over the earth beneath her, descends to earth: 'delapsaque ab aethere summo / constitit in terries nebulasque recedere iussit' ('And with that word she left the heaven, and down to earth she came, / Commanding all the mists away') (I.608-9).<sup>93</sup> This image of a graceful descent does not appear so clearly in the other passages cited by Roberts. Wroth points to her source with clear textual echoes – 'Descended from above, on earth' follows even Ovid's word order, and the root of 'Descended' follows 'delapsa'. What's more 'delapsa' connotes

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<sup>91</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P97, p. 263.

<sup>92</sup> Roberts, 1992, p. 140.

<sup>93</sup> Ovid, p. 44; Golding, p. 52.



a certain amount of elegance of descent, which is present in Wroth's characterisation of Juno. Golding's Juno has no such dignity. The rest of the sonnet, however, does not match the tale of Io. A dialogue between Juno and a bystander (not Jove as in the Io tale) instead recalls the story of Echo:

Corpus adhuc Echo, non vox erat et tamen usum  
garrula non alium, quam nunc habet, oris habebat,  
reddere de multis ut verba novissima posset.  
Fecerat hoc Iuno, quia, cum deprendere posset  
cum Iove saepe suo nymphas in monte iacentes,  
illa deam longo prudens sermone tenebat,  
dum fugerent nymphae. Postquam hoc Saturnia sensit  
“huius” ait “linguae, qua sum delusa, potestas  
parva tibi dabitur vocisque brevissimus usus”;  
reque minas firmat. Tantum haec in fine loquendi  
ingeminat voces auditaque verba reportat (III.359-369).<sup>94</sup>

This Echo was a body then and not an only voice,  
Yet of her speech she had that time no more than now the choice,  
That is to say, of many words the latter to repeat.  
The cause thereof was Juno's wrath. For when that with the feat  
She might have often taken Jove in dalliance with his dames,  
And that by stealth and unbewares in midst of all his games,  
This elf would with her tattling talk detain her by the way

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<sup>94</sup> Ovid, pp. 149-150.

Until that Jove had wrought his will and they were fled away.  
 The which when Juno did perceive, she said with wrathful mood,  
 "This tongue that hath deluded me shall do thee little good;  
 For of thy speech but simple use hereafter shalt thou have."  
 The deed itself did straight confirm the threatenings that she gave;  
 Yet Echo of the former talk doth double oft the end  
 And back again with just report the words erst spoken send.<sup>95</sup>

The story of how Echo lost her voice by abetting Jupiter's infidelity with her babble is shadowed in Wroth's sonnet. The anonymity of Jove's conquests in Wroth's sonnet is closer to Jove's unnamed conquests in Ovid ('nymphas'), with Jupiter's conquest of 'a wanton Nymph', than the particularity of the Io story, and Wroth's 'chasing' in line 6 recalls 'deprendere' from the Echo tale. 'Chase' has particular connotations of hunting in the early modern period and implies an intention to catch (as in Ovid's 'deprehendere') which suggests that Wroth is making reference this passage.<sup>96</sup> Both the situation and Wroth's choice of language situate this as the moment in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* when the nymph Echo lost her voice. However, the sonnet does not follow the pattern of the rest of this tale either. In contrast to Echo's intentionally rambling talk, Pamphilia's very brief response to Juno's questioning shows that Wroth's persona is no Echo. Wroth's speaker does not babble as Echo does, instead her answer is brief and wise, defying the expectations set up by her position in as Echo in this story. Pamphilia's simple reply teaches Juno resignation, the spurned wife, 'I saw him not (said

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<sup>95</sup> Golding, p. 106.

<sup>96</sup> "chase, v.1." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, June 2015. Web. 4 August 2015.

I) although heere are / Many, in whose hearts, Love hath made like warre'. Pamphilia's response to Juno in P97 recalls Langius' response to Lipsius when he asserts that he will flee his country due to its wars: 'Your country, I confess, is tossed and turmoiled grievously; what part of Europe is this day free?'<sup>97</sup> By pointing out the ubiquity of war, in this dialogue Langius urges a Stoic resignation on his friend. Similarly, Pamphilia points out to Juno the universality of such 'war' of the 'heart'. I do not suggest that Wroth is making a reference to Lipsius' text here, but that she is drawing on a contemporary Stoic trope. Wroth's speaker is not only differentiated from the Echo through her succinct wisdom but is also further depicted as teaching constant resignation through her didactic tone and use of Stoic truisms. Pamphilia is constructed as both a good imitator and an authority to be imitated. It could be argued that Pamphilia is an Echo of Juno because her position as faithful lover of the unfaithful Amphilanthus mirrors Juno's relationship with her husband. However, this reading is inaccurate as it ignores the Ovidian context that Wroth has carefully laid out. The reference to the tale of Io – also recalled by Wroth in P65 – brings to mind Juno's vengeful, jealous nature. Pamphilia shows Juno another way. In this way Pamphilia becomes the authority to be echoed, rather than the following Echo.

The second poor poet to populate Wroth's Ovidian pastoral is Narcissus. In *Metamorphoses* the stories of Echo and Narcissus are intertwined. After Echo has lost her original voice, she comes across Narcissus, who is incredibly beautiful. This universal object of desire had rejected all suitors because of his pride. It has been prophesied by Tiresias

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<sup>97</sup> Justus Lipsius, *Justus Lipsius on Constancy*, trans. John Stradling, ed. by John Sellars (Bristol: Phoenix Press, 2006), p. 32.

that Narcissus would live a long life unless he should know himself.<sup>98</sup> Echo sees him and is besotted, she echoes his voice, they meet and he rejects her. Echo's body wastes away in grief until only her echoing voice remains. Having been cursed to meet rejection in love (as he had rejected so many himself), Narcissus comes across his own reflection and falls in love. He realises that he can never touch the beautiful boy he sees in the water and pines away until he too dies. Echo repeats his dying cries in mourning. The prophecy of his birth is fulfilled and he turns into a flower. William Kennedy picks up on Wroth's allusion to Ovid's well known 'inopem me copia fecit' – the phrase Narcissus cries out when confronted with the impossibility of his love for his reflection (III.466) – in P45 which features the phrase 'my plenty makes me poor'.<sup>99</sup> Kennedy argues that in P45 Wroth's speaker criticises other poets' enjoyment of their own meaningless and excessive production of verse.<sup>100</sup>

Nor can I as those pleasant wits injoy  
 My owne fram'd wordes which I account the drosse  
 Of purer thoughts, or reckon them as mosse;  
 While they (wit-sick) themselves to breath imploy.

Alas, thinke I, your plenty shewes your want;  
 For where most feeling is, wordes are more scant;

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<sup>98</sup> Ovid, III.346-348, p. 148; Golding, p. 105.

<sup>99</sup> Ovid, p. 156, Golding, p. 110. I have mentioned P45 earlier in this chapter as an example of a poem in which Wroth engages in literary theory.

<sup>100</sup> William J. Kennedy, *The Site of Petrarchism: Early Modern National Sentiment in Italy, France, and England* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), p. 195.

Yet pardon me, live and your pleasure take.<sup>101</sup>

The idea that outwards shows are not reflective of real love and pain is continued in the next sonnet and frequently reappears in the sequence. What is particularly striking about this poem is the depiction of the ‘pleasant wits’. Wroth evokes courtly versifiers who amuse themselves by performing and admiring their own ‘fram’d words’, that is, their poetry. Kennedy identifies Wroth’s very Ovidian turn of phrase in ‘your plenty shows your want’ as a quotation from the story of Narcissus and argues that these poets are identified with that figure. A twenty-first century reader might be confused as to why Wroth identifies these ‘pleasant wits’ with Ovid’s Narcissus, rather than with Ovid’s Echo (who is known as an empty babbler). Although there is something Narcissistic about taking pleasure in their own poetry, as Narcissus took in his own reflection, surely their empty chatter is closer to that of Echo? Some early modern commentaries depicted Narcissus as one who is too consumed with the past and the abstract and allows real life to pass him by.<sup>102</sup> This provides the model for Wroth’s Narcissus poet who is so consumed with looking backwards towards classical authors, whom he mirrors, emptily and completely, that he fails to notice and value those around him. In P45 the presence of a classical allusion (to Ovid’s Narcissus) in this lesson in writing authentic poetry suggests that it is his reflection in the classics that the Narcissus poet gazes on so lovingly. Unlike the ideal poet, described by Sidney in his *Defence of Poesy*, the Narcissus poet merely

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<sup>101</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P45, pp. 231-232.

<sup>102</sup> This interpretation comes from Petrus Berchorius, a medieval writer who had a great influence on the *Ovid Moralisé* tradition, and editions of his *Ovidius Moralizatus* appeared into the 16<sup>th</sup> Century, Moss, p. 94.

imitates his forbears for his own vanity and to see his own reflection, neglecting his duty to teach virtue, and his duty to engage in contemporary debate. While these pleasant wits might be more sophisticated than an echo, theirs is still a 'dead copy' because, in Thomas Greene's terms, they fail to translate the work into a new *mundus significans*.

Pamphilia demonstrates how to avoid the fate of the Narcissus poet in P53, which sees Pamphilia suffering from love that is likened to the heat of the sun.<sup>103</sup> Thirsty, she stops at a well to drink but finds, instead of relief, her own reflection:

When hott, and thirsty, to a Well I came,  
Trusting by that to quench part of my flame,  
But there I was by Love afresh imbrac'd

Drinke I could not, but in it I did see  
My selfe a living glasse as well as shee;  
For love to see himselfe in, truely plac'd.<sup>104</sup>

The idea of seeking refreshment and finding none recalls the opening sonnet of the *Astrophil and Stella* sequence. There, Astrophil seeks a watery relief for his 'sunburn'd brain' from 'turning others' leaves' (i.e. reading the work of other poets), but he receives no refreshment, and remains unable to produce poetry (AS1, 7-8). Pamphilia's encounter with her reflection at the well must also be read as a literary encounter, similar to Astrophil's meeting with

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<sup>103</sup> Also identified by Kennedy, p. 246.

<sup>104</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P53, p. 236.

‘others’ feet’ (11). Pamphilia, is not only trapped by the sight of her own reflection, like Narcissus, but also discovers that she herself is a mere reflection, ‘but in it I did see / My selfe a living glasse as well as shee’. Kennedy has argued that this image of the poet trapped by her (or his) own reflection is about arrogance, vanity, and empty show. However, Wroth’s image also reveals the original itself to be a reflection, and therefore describes a poet who is a mere reflection of ‘others’ feet’ or work. This subtle addition to Ovid’s tale – that is, the Narcissus-figure’s realization that she is no more an original than the reflection in the water – enters into the same discourse as Horace’s *Ars Poetica* and Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy*. The combination of the poet who, when she knows herself (like Ovid’s Narcissus) is revealed to be no more than a reflection or imitator, and the use of a classical authority (Ovid) links Narcissus with the poet who mirrors classical sources without creativity or invention.

Although Wroth places Pamphilia in the position of the Narcissus poet, she does not leave her there. Instead, the following two sonnets dramatise Pamphilia’s escape from this poetic cul-de-sac of empty imitation, and the movement is closed by the ‘Pamphilia’ signature. In the second of these three sonnets, P54, Pamphilia instructs her eyes (possibly viewed in the reflection of the previous sonnet) how they, together, should gain liberty: ‘This done, we shall from torments freed be.’<sup>105</sup> Pamphilia teaches her reflection to eschew the behaviours exhibited by Narcissus. The startling image of Narcissus’ tears disturbing the water is alluded to in Pamphilia’s

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<sup>105</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P54, p. 237.

command: 'O Stay mine eyes, shed not these fruitlesse teares'.<sup>106</sup> Unlike Narcissus, she holds back from disturbing the water with her tears. Pamphilia's course may also bring her towards death, as the bottling up her tears will drown her and the storing up of her sighs will break her heart, yet it is not a death like Narcissus' nor like Echo's. The unfortunates of Ovid's tale both waste away diminishing in form and strength, and, as they dwindle towards death, they become much less than they once were. However, in P54 Wroth depicts Pamphilia as growing in strength; her stockpiling of sighs and tears seems more akin to the stockpiling of weapons, as her sighs will 'be enough to breake the strongest heart'. Paradoxically, and in contrast to the Ovidian lovers, Love's suffering makes her more powerful, rather than weaker.<sup>107</sup> The culmination of this fortification through the suffering of love comes in the third sonnet of this grouping, P55. Pamphilia becomes a burning spectacle of love's power: 'The greater, purer, brighter; and doth fill / No eye with wonder more then hopes still bee'.<sup>108</sup> Pamphilia's brightness ever growing until it is reduced to ashes is specifically for others. Other eyes are filled with wonder, this spectacle is not merely for her own satisfaction or sustenance. It will teach others the way to love. Wroth takes Pamphilia from what a poet should not be, a self-indulgent mirror to what has gone before, to what a poet ought to be: one who innovates and teaches. The persona of Narcissus is reformed and improved whilst Wroth's Pamphilia sports his mantle. The drowning, breaking, and burning of Pamphilia does not end the

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<sup>106</sup> 'Dixit et ad faciem rediit male sanus eandem / et lacrimis turbavit aquas, obscuraque moto / reddita forma lacu est', Ovid, III.474-476; 'This said, in rage he turns again unto the foresaid shade / And rores the water with the tears and slobbering that he made, / That through his troubling of the well his image gan to fade.' Golding, p. 110.

<sup>107</sup> The complicated paradox of gaining strength through suffering, and its relationship to early modern ideas of female heroism, are explored in chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>108</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P55, pp. 237-238.



speaker's life (while the end of a section, this is not the end of the sequence), but instead seems to purge and renew her. Pamphilia's constancy creates a powerful force, and a glowing example of moral strength, in contrast to Narcissus' status as a cautionary figure.

## 2.6 Lycenia's Complaint

The Echo and Narcissus pair of poets become dramatised in Lycenia's complaint in the *Urania*, 'A Sheephard who no care did take'.<sup>109</sup> A pastoral Echo-figure espies and gazes adoringly on the beloved.<sup>110</sup> The beloved flees because their heart lies elsewhere. The Echo-figure echoes the speech of the beloved and, at the end of the poem undergoes an Ovidian, physical transformation, pining away into water. However, what is striking about the Echo-figure of Wroth's poem is that he is male, the shepherd Aradeame, and that his Narcissus is female. Wroth's presentation of the shepherdess as a poet makes this figure yet another in a series of ciphers for Wroth's own poetic persona throughout the *Urania*. Wroth identifies her shepherdess as a poet in the line: 'I lov'd, and worse, I said I lov'd' (p. 622, line 13; stanza 34, line 5).<sup>111</sup> The expression of love takes the form of 'papers' (618.26; 20.2), that is, writing. So it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that when Wroth's heroine 'said [she] lov'd', she wrote it. The shepherdess is cast in the role of Narcissus but rejects this role in order to create a 'new way' (618.27;

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<sup>109</sup> Wroth, *Urania* 1, pp. 614-623, Scolar Press facsimile, pp. 520-529.

<sup>110</sup> For pastoral poetry in the English Renaissance, see Michelle O'Callaghan, "Pastoral", *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, Vol. 2, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 225-237.

<sup>111</sup> Roberts' edition of the romance numbers the lines on each page. I have also included line numbers within stanzas for ease of reference. Hereafter line numbers will appear in shortened form: e.g. 622.13; 34.5.

20.3), suggesting, since she is a poet, a rejection of a moribund pursuit of a classical ideal in favour of innovation.

Aradeame's role as Echo is clear. He appears in a pastoral setting, catches sight of his beloved, and is instantly entranced. He then pursues her as she flees, echoing her language, and ultimately loses his body in pining for her. In pursuing his beloved Aradeame does not take on the role of the Ovidian male pursuer, because he does not aim to overpower and rape the object of his chase. Like Echo, once his offer of devotion is rejected, he pines away in solitude.

The shepherd 'who no care did take / of ought but of his flock,' (614.1-2; 1.1-2) begins caring only for his sheep. His ideas of love are all born out of his shepherding life, as if he has no other frame of reference, 'His Lambe he deemes not halfe so faire, / Though it were very white' (615.5-6; 5.5-6). The shepherd's simplistic analogy between whiteness and beauty lends a gentle comedy to his innocent state. After the object of his love speaks, the shepherd's language is transformed to include the typical language of the love poet; he echoes the imagery associated with her and begins to join in her talk about 'Willow tree[s]' (616.2; 9.2). The Maid is first seen lying by a willow tree (614.23; 3.7), which Aradeame then begins to haunt, and which 'He cals his Martyr stake' (622.32; 36.8).<sup>112</sup> In this way Aradeame can be seen as an Echo in that he repeats both the behaviour – he becomes mournful and love-sick – and the language of his lover.

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<sup>112</sup> The image of the martyr's stake suggests death by fire, whereas Aradeame will die pining away and his eventual end is more closely associated with water than fire. However, the image communicates his devotion and suffering.

Wroth characterises this echoed language of love as rather clichéd through the stock image of the willow.<sup>113</sup> In the process of this echoing the shepherd begins to lose himself and his body. He seeks to make his body into a copy of hers:

That place he first beheld her in,  
his byding he doth make:  
The Tree his liberty did win,  
He cals his Martyr stake (622.29-32; 36.5-8).

Having fixed himself to this ‘Martyr stake’, Aradeame turns, through his weeping into a waterfall: his tears ‘were turnd into a streame, / Himselfe the head, his eyes the spring’ (623.12-13; 38.4-5). This watery transformation, while not as entirely visceral as Ovid’s description of Echo’s, can be more directly likened to others in the *Metamorphoses*, such as Cyane, who ‘melting into tears’ becomes part of the spring that she had ruled over.<sup>114</sup> Cyane’s tears are provoked by sympathy for the mistreatment of another, Proserpine. In some ways Aradeame’s fate is caused by a sort of sympathy: just as Cyane pines away in sympathy for Proserpine, so Wroth’s shepherd identifies with the maid whom he loves.

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<sup>113</sup> The satirical use of willow imagery invites the reader to view this poem as metapoetic as well as narrative. For willow imagery as a common trope, see Jill Seal Millman and Gillian Wright eds, *Early Modern Women’s Manuscript Poetry* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 236. Ake argues that willow imagery in this period was connected with a female oral tradition and connotes the private grief of women: Ake, p. 132.

<sup>114</sup> The description of Cyane’s transformation in Ovid is rather more physical too, but the simplicity of Aradeame’s transformation can be seen as part of Wroth’s effort to avoid a male blazon. For Cyane’s transformation see Ovid, V.425-347, Golding, p. 166.

However, another transformation of unfortunate lovers in the *Metamorphoses* must be considered: that of Hermaphroditus and Salmacis.<sup>115</sup> Just as in Echo and Narcissus, the female lover views her much-pursued, handsome love object in a pastoral, watery setting and he rejects her advances. Translation, or perhaps interpretation, is also at issue in this story: Salmacis wishes never to be parted from her beloved; the gods interpret (or translate) her prayer in their own way, and when she steps into the pool that he bathes in their bodies do in fact become one. The result is, as Golding puts it, 'a toy / Of double shape' in which the genders of the two figures are both apparent. 'Ye could not say it was a perfect boy / Nor perfect wench; it seemèd both and none of both to been'.<sup>116</sup> Although the bodies of both are borne witness to in the figure which emerges from the pool, that figure is Hermaphroditus and speaks with his voice: 'Hermaphroditus ait'.<sup>117</sup> Salmacis' previous identity as well as her bodily autonomy is lost.

Echo and Narcissus ends with a similar privileging of the masculine voice or identity, as Narcissus' voice is echoed and prolonged by Echo's repetition, and her own identity becomes wholly subservient. Whereas in the first dialogue Echo's sexual agenda corrupts Narcissus' language, the second dialogue echoes his meaning as well as his words. Like Salmacis' invasion into the space that Hermaphroditus occupies, the shepherd of Wroth's poem seeks to inhabit the place (once) occupied by the object of his desires, but rather than being rewarded by togetherness, he, like Salmacis and

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<sup>115</sup> Golding, pp. 131-135.

<sup>116</sup> Golding, p. 134.

<sup>117</sup> Ovid, IV.383, p. 204.

Hermaphroditus, suffers a watery transformation. Like Salmacis too, Aradeame loses both his former body and his former mind.

Just as it is Hermaphroditus' voice and his curse that then characterises the pool, so too the ideological attributes of the stream in Wroth's poem are based on the maiden's agenda that Aradeame has assimilated, rather than the shepherd's previous simple infatuation with sheep. Anyone who drinks from Aradeame's river will

[...] banish quite

All fickle thoughts of change,

But still in one choice to delight,

And never think to range (623.17-20; 39.1-4).

The attribute preserved by the stream originates in a preoccupation of the shepherdess: her constancy. Whilst bewailing the inconstancy of her lover the shepherdess asserts her own constancy, saying her lover's inconstancy makes her 'more constant burne' (620.28; 28.4), and vows, not only to remain faithful but to make her constancy famous:

Ile make my loyalty

To shine so cleare, as thy foule fault

To all men shall bee knowne,

Thy change to thy changd heart be brought,

My faith abroad be blowne (618.20-24; 19.4-8).

And so, although, unlike Echo, Aradeame is not left with a voice, like Echo he continues his mimicry even after his body has wasted away as he continues to promulgate the shepherdess' message of constancy.

Wroth's Echo-Aradeame is closer to his Ovidian prototype than Wroth's Narcissus is to hers, and although the female figure in the poem is introduced to the reader in the role of Narcissus, she escapes the fate of any of her Ovidian inspirations. Narcissus ends, like Echo, by wasting away in love with himself, while Salmacis and Hermaphroditus lose part of themselves, but both the body and mind of Wroth's female figure are preserved. Indeed, Wroth's male Echo plays out Ovid's tragic story, inviting her, with an echo of the *Metamorphoses*, to join him in wasting away, but the shepherdess rejects this offer:

“Yet give me leave,” sigh'd he with teares,

“To live but where you are,

My woes shal waite upon your feares,

My sighs attend your care:

Ile weepe whenever you shall waile,

If you sigh, I will cry,

When you complaine, Ile never faile

To waile my misery (621.9-16; 30.1-8).

Wroth uses alliteration, polyptoton and internal rhyme ('sigh' and 'cry', 'faile' and 'waile') to heighten the echoing sound of this stanza. The scenario offered by the shepherd echoes that described by Ovid at the death of Narcissus. Ovid describes Echo's response to Narcissus' suffering:

Quae tamen ut vidit, quamvis irata memorque,  
indoluit, quotiensque puer miserabilis “eheu”  
dixerat, haec resonis iterabat vocibus “eheu”;  
cumque suos manibus percusserat ille lacertos,  
haec quoque reddebat sonitum plangoris eundem.  
Ultima vox solitam fuit haec spectantis in undam,  
“heu frustra, dilecte puer!” totidemque remisit  
verba locus, dictoque vale “vale!” inquit et Echo (III.492-499).<sup>118</sup>

Who, when she sawe his state,  
Although in heart she angry were, and mindeful of his pride,  
Yet ruing his unhappy case, as often as he cried,  
“Alas”, she cried, “Alas” likewise with shirl [sic] redoubled sound.  
And when he beat his breast, or strake his feet against the ground,  
She made like noise of clapping too. These are the words that last  
Out of his lips, beholding still his wonted image, passed:  
“Alas, sweet boy, beloved in vain, farewell!” And by and by  
With sighing sound the selfsame words the Echo did reply.<sup>119</sup>

This second call and response between Narcissus and Echo has a greater sense of unity, as nothing is lost in translation (as it is in their previous dialogue), as both Echo and Narcissus share the same intention: to mourn the loss of the same ‘dilectus puer’ as Echo repeats Narcissus’ ‘eheu’ and his

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<sup>118</sup> Ovid, p. 158.

<sup>119</sup> Golding, p. 111.

‘vale’. Notably Golding does not dramatise Echo’s response in the same way as Ovid, as he reports her speech indirectly: ‘the selfesame words the Echo did reply.’ This indicates Ovid’s Latin is Wroth’s model, rather than Golding’s popular translation. However, Wroth’s shepherdess rejects Aradeame’s offer to recreate the end of Ovid’s tale, and the image of the two lovers moves away from its classical predecessor. Wroth allows her maiden hints at defiance: ‘she rose / The papers putting by, / And once againe a new way chose’; and finally (on 622.17; 35.1), she escapes her moribund lover and leaves the poem. Wroth’s ‘new way’ signals a deliberate departure from the course taken by her classical predecessors both Ovid and his creation in Narcissus.

In Lycenia’s complaint, as in P53 and the sonnets which follow it, the female poet is invited to take on the role of Narcissus and she rejects this role in favour of preaching her own message about the power of constant love. In this way, Wroth at once adheres to and dramatises Philip Sidney’s complex injunctions about interacting with classical authorities in the *Defence*. Wroth makes clear and close allusions, yet in each case diverges from the course laid out by her Ovidian model in order to, like the Shepherdess of Lycenia’s complaint, promulgate her message of constancy.

## 2.7 Mary Sidney and the Virtuous Echo

Wroth’s assertion of authority through her performance of *aemulatio*, or ‘heuristic imitation’ is in marked contrast to the authorization strategies employed by her aunt, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke. Mary Sidney not only edited, managed, and printed her brother’s work, but also continued it. She completed Philip Sidney’s project of translating the psalms, producing a



piece of work that was as much hers as his. This was not, however, how she presented her work to the public. In the presentation manuscript that she prepared for the Queen, the two dedicatory poems – which have received much interest from Sidney scholars – suggested, instead, that her brother was acting through her. Mary Sidney’s authorisation strategies are lauded as canny because she negates the contemporary taboo surrounding women’s writing by leaning on her brother’s authority and denying her own authorship.<sup>120</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb suggests that Mary Sidney made her female voice acceptable by taking on the role of Echo. The version of Echo featured in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, is, Lamb argues, an appropriate persona for a woman. Her utterances are involuntary and in sympathy with a leading male voice. These utterances are evocative of grief – an appropriate motivation for a woman. In his 1595 *Astrophel* Spenser depicted his patron Mary Sidney as Clorinda. Through *The Lay of Clorinda*, Spenser depicts Mary Sidney’s writing activities as an appropriate expression of grief. While Clorinda speaks independently, Lamb highlights the ways in which she follows the usual model of female figures of pastoral elegy, whose function is ‘to feel compassion, to weep or even to die in sympathy for the deceased. Sometimes, however, they join in with complaints of their own.’<sup>121</sup> These figures, often nymphs or similar, serve a function that could be likened to pathetic fallacy,

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<sup>120</sup> Beth Wynne Fisker argues that Mary Sidney’s strategy is a ‘camouflage’ for the ‘assertiveness of her style’: Fisker, “‘To the Angell Spirit...’ Mary Sidney’s Entry into the ‘World of Words’”, *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, ed. by Anne Haselkorn and Betty Travitsky (Amhurst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), p. 266; however, Suzanne Trill argues that Mary Sidney’s presentation of her authorship is about collaboration, not self-abnegation: Suzanne Trill, “‘We Thy Sydnean Psalmes Shall Celebrate’: Collaborative Authorship, Sidney’s Sister and the English Devotional Lyric”, *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, ed. by Susan Wiseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 97-116.

<sup>121</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 63.

in that they, almost part of nature, reflect the mourning of the central male figure. Spenser's depiction of Mary Sidney in *Astrophel* also comes close to that other 'female figure that haunts the genre of elegy': Echo.<sup>122</sup> This Echo is also unthreatening, because as a repetition of a male voice, it lacks the threatening element that usually accompanies female speech: the usurpation of male power. The Echo merely replicates what has gone before, supporting and reinforcing a masculine voice. In this way the emblem of the Echo was also viewed as a positive role model for women, illustrating constrained and abbreviated speech, and offering guidance for women's role in marriage. A woman's speech should harmoniously follow her husband's, substituting one word for many.<sup>123</sup> In a 1630 courtesy book Robert Cleaver writes: 'as the echo answereth but one word for many, which are spoken to her, so a woman's answer should be in a word.'<sup>124</sup> Importantly, the Echo not only repeats, but reduces what goes before, making the woman's speech subsidiary to the man's in size as well.

In Mary Sidney's dedicatory poem 'To the Angell spirit of the most excellent Sir Phillip Sidney', the poetic voice is presented as Sidney's double, but one like the voice of the Echo or wife that is lesser and has no agency of its own. Echoing the language of love poetry, Mary Sidney states that the work is doubly authored by her brother, both in the lines that he himself wrote, and in the lines she wrote, because he channelled these through her:

To thee pure sprite, to thee alone's addres't

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<sup>122</sup> Lamb, 1990, pp .65-66.

<sup>123</sup> Danielle Clarke, "Speaking Women: Rhetoric and the Construction of Female Talk", *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Jennifer Richards and Alison Thorne (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 71.

<sup>124</sup> Waller, p. 196.

this coupled worke, by double int'rest thine:  
First rais'de by thy blest hand, and what is mine  
inspir'd by thee, thy secrett power imprest (1-4).<sup>125</sup>

The use of 'imprest' denotes the forcing or compelling of the speaker, thus removing agency and choice, and calls to mind the stamping of coins; in this way Mary Sidney asserts that all her value is derived from Philip's stamp.<sup>126</sup> The image also connotes the pressing of forms in wax or another such malleable object. The role of the impressed malleable object is purely passive. The idea of an impression implies a copy that follows, that is less distinct, and incomplete. In this way, the impression is another form of Echo. This image of impressionability can be found frequently in early modern texts, including Erasmus' injunction to 'press wax whilst it is softest' because, he argues, teaching is most effective on the impressionable minds of young boys.<sup>127</sup> This characterization of herself as suggestible, and perhaps childlike, again contributes to the lack of agency claimed by Mary Sidney. Instead of challenging the misogynist ideologies which suggested that women's minds were impressionable and feeble, Mary Sidney to some extent affirms them, suggesting that her receptive, childlike and passive self makes her the perfect vessel to receive the angel spirit of her brother. In the 1623 edition of Samuel Daniel's *Workes* a version of the poem appears in which Mary Sidney

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<sup>125</sup> Mary Sidney, *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Amelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets*, ed. by Danielle Clarke (London: Penguin Books, 2000), p.50.

<sup>126</sup> Mary Sidney's self-deprecation does leave space for ambiguity. The line might also be interpreted as implying that the speaker impresses Sidney's 'secret power' for her own ends.

<sup>127</sup> Cited in Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 100-101.

presents herself as further weakened by abject grief. She describes herself as a person

In whom, thy loss hath laid to utter waste;  
The wrack of time, untimely all defaced,  
Remaining as the tomb of life deceased:  
Where, in my heart the highest room thou hast (30-33).<sup>128</sup>

The poet presents herself as a ruin, a structure 'laid [...] waste' by time, and hollow as a 'tomb'. She is no more than a vessel or 'tomb' for the spirit, as grief and time have destroyed anything else there was. The text of Mary Sidney's 1599 presentation copy also concerns a heart, but is more visceral and disturbing:

To which theise dearest offrings of my hart  
dissolv'd to Inke, while penn's impressions move  
the bleeding veine of never dying love:  
I render here (78-80).

Mary Sidney depicts the very words on the page as her heart dissolved into ink. As the pen writes in this ink, more blood flow is provoked from the 'bleeding veine'. The bleeding 'of never dying love' is intriguing as the bleeding organ or creature ought to be weakened by this loss of blood. Instead, this love is 'never dying' almost as if it is, paradoxically,

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<sup>128</sup> Mary Sidney, *The Broadview Anthology of Sixteenth-Century Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Marie H Loughlin, Sandra Bell, and Patricia Brace (London: Broadview Press, 2012).

strengthened by the flow. This kind of subversive strength influenced Wroth's writing. In P55, for example, Pamphilia is strengthened by her suffering.<sup>129</sup> The 1623 variant of 'To the Angell spirit', whether developed by Mary Sidney or sanitised by another hand, is clearly derived from this moment in the 1599 version. If Mary Sidney's inky heart is dissolved into the psalms, then it must be Philip Sidney's heart in her chest – we have already learnt that he is the true author of the text, moving his sister to write. The image of Mary Sidney, with her brother's heart shut inside her, compelling her to write is, therefore, extant from the first incarnation of the poem. This image of a surviving, immortal part of Sidney, lodged inside the physical body of a female relative, allowing his legacy to survive, is one that influenced Wroth heavily. It is the heart of Sidney shut inside her that compels Wroth to write, just as did the angel spirit of Sidney lodged inside Mary Sidney.

While Mary Sidney presented herself as a double of Philip Sidney's, she never claimed equality with her brother. She remains profoundly incomplete and fractured, like the Echo. Fisker notes Mary Sidney's constant reminders of the incompleteness of her own contributions ('this halfe maim'd peece' (18)).<sup>130</sup> This is certainly in keeping with Lamb's identification of Mary Sidney's poetic voice with Echo. In Ovid Echo's speech is not only following, but it is also incomplete as she repeats the final word, not the full statement. Mary Sidney's self presentation is as a shadow, an echo, or an impression of the original. Her voice is presented as following, and in service to the memory of Philip Sidney. She is a reflection from beyond the grave, rather

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<sup>129</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P55, pp. 237-238.

<sup>130</sup> Fisker, pp. 271-272.

than, despite being stiled ‘Philip’s Phoenix’, a reincarnation.<sup>131</sup> Although there is much that is inherited from Mary Sidney by her niece, Wroth, however, does not follow her aunt in her identification with the mourning echo. Wroth’s relationship with the figure of Echo is clearly informed by her aunt’s, yet Wroth confronts and problematises the idea of the echo poet and distances her own poetic voice from this category. As Clarke notes, as well as representing a model for a virtuous woman, the figure of Echo also represented duplicity and inanity in women, and – even worse – the ‘dry repetition of hackneyed topoi [...] raided from the classics’ in poets.<sup>132</sup> Rather than an echo of her uncle, Wroth depicts herself more as a sort of poetic reincarnation. She will not repeat his words, nor will she continue them, she will resurrect him in new work. This idea again, is one developed from, but significantly different from Mary Sidney’s presentation of her relationship to her brother. Mary Sidney’s Echo is the stepping-stone Wroth used to formulate her own Sidney voice. Wroth, like Mary Sidney, is compelled (or impressed) to write by having something of Philip Sidney implanted into her body; her poetic voice somehow avoids the same level of disavowal and rejection of agency. Wroth’s speaker owns and declares her role as poet. While Mary Sidney’s thoughts are like ‘smallest streams’ and it is Sidney who is ‘Wonder of men, sole born, sole of thy kind’, in contrast Wroth’s speaker is herself superlative (‘a heart more flaming than all the rest’) and individual in virtue. So, though Mary Sidney is her brother’s double, her meek self-presentation makes her a lesser reflection, a reminder of his glory and an

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<sup>131</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, *Philip’s Phoenix: Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 81-2, 141.

<sup>132</sup> Clarke, 2007, pp. 77-78.

incomplete copy, like an impression in wax or a fractured echo. Wroth on the other hand presents herself as emulating Sidney in another way. She is his equal rather than his reflection. She has inherited his authority, or rather, his authority is reborn in her.

### 3. Complaint and Exemplarity

#### 3.1 Introduction

The next two chapters (3 and 4) continue to explore the ways in which Wroth uses Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to characterise Pamphilia as a teacher of constancy. This chapter argues that Wroth employs a method I have already defined as 'heuristic imitation' - that is referencing, but then manipulating and diverting from her source - of *Metamorphoses* in order to present Pamphilia as an example for others to follow. I build on the argument of the previous chapter in which I have argued that Wroth presents Pamphilia as a model for imitation in contrast to the cautionary figures of Echo and Narcissus. However, this argument raises some problems that I will resolve in this chapter. Some scholars have interpreted Wroth's poetry as a communication of her extramarital relationship with William Herbert or as an expression of her erotic frustration. If this were the case, it would indeed be difficult to argue for Pamphilia as a model of virtue within her early modern context, therefore, I will address some of this scholarship in this chapter and demonstrate my argument that the 1621 print publication of the sonnet sequence was not designed to be read as the narrative of a fallen woman. Another problem that is presented by the argument that Pamphilia is an exemplary, rather than cautionary, figure is that the cautionary figure of female complaint was one that dominated perceptions of the female voice in the early modern period.<sup>1</sup> As such some scholars have identified the sonnet

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<sup>1</sup> For the dominance of male authorship of female-voiced complaint poetry, see John Kerrigan, *Motives of Woe: Shakespeare and Female Complaint: A Critical Anthology*, ed.



sequence as an extended complaint in which a fallen and deserted woman makes her lament. I argue that while Wroth engages with the tradition of female-voiced complaint, it is a tradition with which she self-consciously refuses to align her heroine. I will show that not only is Pamphilia not a fallen woman, she is not consistently represented in the position of a deserted woman, which is an important characteristic of the female complainant. However, this argument raises the question: to what extent is the cautionary figure different from the exemplary figure? In this chapter I will address that question, arguing that while there is cross-over between these two positions Wroth makes a self-conscious effort to align her speaker with the latter and not with the former.

### 3.2 Pamphilia in the Labyrinth

Chapter 2 examined Wroth's engagement with the tale of Echo and Narcissus, but *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* also engages with a range of stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, both narratively and textually. Wroth's sonnet sequence is interspersed with references to *Metamorphoses*: in one poem she shows us Philomela, whilst in another Cupid wanders freely with his arrows. References are made to Io and Argus, the tale of Venus and Mars, and to Theseus in the labyrinth. Wroth's engagement with the story of Theseus and the Minotaur is one that cuts to the heart of the scholarly argument about Pamphilia's status as an abandoned woman. Much work on

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by John Kerrigan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 2. For the Elizabethan popularity of the genre, see Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), p. 251. While the authoring of female-voiced complaint was largely the preserve of men, early modern women did engage with the genre. For women's engagement with female-voiced complaint in this period, see Katherine Jo Smith, *Ovidian Female-Voiced Complaint Poetry in Early Modern England* (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 2016).

Wroth's use of Ovid in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* has focused on the opening and closing lines of the *corona* in P77 and P90, 'In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne?'<sup>2</sup> This, therefore, seems a good place to start in demonstrating Wroth's approach to Ovid. Robin Farabaugh and Heather James identify this as an Ovidian reference, particularly to Ovid's *Heroides X*, Ariadne to Theseus.<sup>3</sup> This reference situates Wroth's speaker in the tradition of female-voiced complaint, for which Ovid's *Heroides* was a model text. I will argue that Wroth refers not to *Heroides* but to *Metamorphoses*, and that she characterises her speaker as an improved and exemplary version of Theseus, rather than an abandoned lover.

For James, Wroth's speaker is the monster in the labyrinth, while for Farabaugh the speaker is Ariadne. James links Wroth's reference to the labyrinth to Samuel Daniel's minotaur in *Rosamund*, suggesting her presence in the labyrinth represents Pamphilia's identification with the minotaur; that is, an expression of shame at her own monstrous desires.<sup>4</sup> James quotes Denny's letter denouncing Wroth as a 'monster'; however, the poem was written and printed before Denny's response to it, so Wroth could not yet be reflecting on Denny's misogynist criticism in this way, and there is nothing in the sonnet to suggest Pamphilia is ashamed of her passion. The speaker's reference to shame (line 6) concerns her temptation not to take on the labyrinth. Her decision to continue marks an heroic refusal to avoid suffering. However, Farabaugh argues that Wroth presents Pamphilia as

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), P77, p. 251, P90, p. 258.

<sup>3</sup> For *Heroides X*, see Ovid, *Heroides, Amores*, trans. by Grant Showerman, revised by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 41 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), pp. 120-145.

<sup>4</sup> Heather James, "Ovid in Renaissance English Literature", *The Blackwell Companion to Ovid*, ed. by Peter E. Knox (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 438.

Ariadne deserted on Naxos, in a labyrinth of emotional anguish parallel to Theseus' literal labyrinth:

Wroth's sequence adds to the evocation of this story's despair a role reversal: instead of Theseus in the labyrinth, we find Pamphilia, the female speaker. [...] A woman there instead asks the readers to see her misery as equivalent in severity to the plight of the mythic hero who had found himself in the original labyrinth.<sup>5</sup>

There are three problems with this identification. First, it does not follow that because Pamphilia is a female lover she must be identified with Ariadne rather than Theseus. Second, this identification suggests that Wroth's *corona* is an extended complaint; it is not. It is, in fact, a lesson in how to love. Third, there is not enough textual overlap between *Heroides X* and the opening sonnet of Wroth's *corona* to support this claim.

Wroth has drawn her description of the labyrinth not from *Heroides X*, but *Metamorphoses* book VIII, as I will show in the following section. Wroth's sonnet P77 describes a complicated labyrinth:

In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne,  
Wayes are on all sides, while the way I misse:  
If to the right hand, there in love I burne,  
Let mee goe forward, therein danger is.

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<sup>5</sup> Robin Farabaugh, "Ariadne, Venus, and the Labyrinth: Classical Sources and the Thread of Instruction in Mary Wroth's works", *Journal of English and German Philology*, 96, 2 (1997), pp. 207-208.

If to the left, suspition hinders blisse:

Let mee turne backe, shame cryes I ought returne:

Nor faint, though crosses which my fortunes kisse,

Stand still is harder, although sure to mourne.

Thus let mee take the right, or left hand way,

Goe forward, or stand still, or back retire:

I must these doubts indure without allay

Or helpe, but travell finde for my best hire.

Yet that which most my troubled sense doth move,

Is to leave all and take the threed of Love.<sup>6</sup>

Wroth's reference to 'the threed of Love' which will guide the speaker through the maze does indeed recall the story of Theseus, but is the story enough to link Wroth to Ovid? It could be argued that the presence of this thread is what specifically differentiates the situation of Pamphilia from that of Ariadne. Farabaugh comments that 'the labyrinth in Wroth's P77 derives its particular power from the intensity of Ariadne's experience in *Heroides X*, an experience from which, unlike a garden maze, there is no mortal exit.'<sup>7</sup> This suggests that Pamphilia – like Ariadne – is an abandoned woman whose only choice is death. Yet this notion of a lack of exit is not evident in Wroth's text, as she introduces the thread that will lead her through this labyrinth in

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<sup>6</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P77, p. 251.

<sup>7</sup> Farabaugh, p. 209.

the very first sonnet of the *corona*, when Pamphilia concludes the true solution is to ‘take the threed of Love’. Wroth’s labyrinth does indeed closely recall a text of Ovid’s, but it is not *Heroides X. Metamorphoses* treats the experiences of Theseus and Ariadne cursorily, but the maze itself is given more space. Daedalus’ ingenious maze is presented as being in a state of flux, neither fixed nor solid:

Daedalus ingenio fabrae celeberrimus artis  
ponit opus turbatque notas et lumina flexum  
ducit in errorem variarum ambage viarum.  
Non secus ac liquidus Phrygiis Maeandros in arvis  
ludit et ambiguo lapsu refluitque fluitque  
occurrentesque sibi venturas adspicit undas  
et nunc ad fontes, nunc ad mare versus apertum  
incertas exercet aquas: ita Daedalus implet  
innumeras errore vias vixque ipse reverti  
ad limen potuit: tanta est fallacia tecti (VIII.159-168).<sup>8</sup>

Immediately one Daedalus, renowned in that land  
For fine device and workmanship in building, went in hand  
To make it. He confounds his work with sudden stops and stays  
And with the great uncertainty of sundry winding ways  
Leads in and out and to and fro at divers doors astray.

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<sup>8</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vol I: Books 1-8, trans. by Frank Justus Miller, revised by G.P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library, 42 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916). pp. 416-418.

And as with trickling stream the brook Maeander seemes to play  
 In Phrygia, and with doubtful race runs counter to and fro  
 And, meeting with himself, doth look if all his streams or no  
 Come after and, retiring eft clean backward to his spring  
 And marching eft to open Sea as straight as any string,  
 Indenteth with reversèd stream; even so of winding ways  
 Unnumerable Daedalus within his work conveys.  
 Yea scarce himselfe could find the meanes to winde himselfe well out:  
 So busie and so intricate the house was all about.<sup>9</sup>

The confusion evoked by Ovid's simile of the Meaeander river, famous for its winding shape, reduced in Golding to a more gentle 'brook', is echoed closely by Wroth's labyrinth. Wroth's engagement is clearly with the Latin text rather than with Golding's translation. Wroth's 'Ways are on all sides while the way I miss,' follows Ovid's 'ducit in errorem variarum ambae viarum'. Ovid's 'variarum [...] viarum' with its alliterative 'v' and the repetition of the '-iarum' evokes the frenzy and confusion caused by the maze, and Wroth creates a similar effect with the polyptoton 'Wayes [...] way'. Both evoke the confusing sense of repetition which a labyrinth affords. The constant turning of Ovid's river-like maze 'nunc ad [...] nunc ad [...]' is mirrored by Pamphilia's turns within her labyrinth, as each is signalled with the repetition of 'or' and 'let me', creating the same building sense of confusion we see in Ovid. Ovid's simile is in the historic present. Wroth also chooses to dramatise Pamphilia's experience of the maze in the present tense.

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<sup>9</sup> Arthur Golding, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. by Arthur Golding (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 241.

Pamphilia's confusion 'let me take the left hand or the right hand way' recalls Ovid's 'ambiguo'. Wroth picks up on Ovid's 'filo' in her straightforward 'threed' rather than Golding's 'clew of linen' and her description of turbulent confusion more closely resembles Ovid's watery simile than Golding's tamer account: 'as with trickling stream the brook Maeander seems to play / In Phrigia and with doubtful race runs counter to and fro'. This calm rendering lacks much of the drama of the original. Ovid's 'ludit' may be playful, but there the river is out of control, playing beyond its bounds in fields ('arvis'), and unpredictability and lack of control are emphasised in the way 'undas' spills emphatically over the edge of the line. Golding's translation of 'fallacia' as 'intricate', and his omission of a translation for 'incertas', brush over any potential for the sort of emotional or moral subtext that Wroth and others have drawn on in the depiction of an emotional labyrinth.

The clearest indication that Wroth does not mean for her speaker to be viewed as Ariadne is the contrast between this opening of the *corona* and another poem from the *Urania* in which Wroth does indeed identify a female speaker with Ariadne, very much in the manner described by Farabaugh. In the complaint 'Deare, though unconstant, these I send to you', Dorolina compares her case in turn with various deserted women from Ovid's *Heroides*, including Ariadne:

Faire Ariadne never tooke more care,  
Then I did how you might in safety fare,  
Her thrid my life was to draw you from harme,  
My study wholly how I might all charme  
That dangerous were, while pleasures you obtain'd,

And I the hazard with labour gain'd: (lines 15-20)

[...]

I Ariadne am alike oppress'd,

Alike deserving, and alike distress'd: (lines 27-28)<sup>10</sup>

Just as in both the *Heroides* and the *Metamorphoses*, here the thread comes from Ariadne to lead Theseus (Ariadne does not take the thread). Wroth's 'to draw' is a clear echo of the *Heroides*' 'ducit'. While the thread has been transformed into Dorolina's life, its purpose and the characters' relationship to it remain the same. So, although Wroth was innovative in her use of classical authorities, there is also a formal aspect to her relationship with these texts: the classical identifications that Wroth makes are based on situation rather than gender. In P77 Pamphilia is not giving the thread or becoming the thread. Like Theseus, Pamphilia takes the thread. The idea that, in the opening of the *corona*, Pamphilia is a Theseus-figure has been dismissed because Pamphilia is a female speaker.<sup>11</sup> Despite the fact that it is usually women in this situation in complaint poetry, the identification made in this complaint is based, not on Dorolina's sex, but on her status as one deserted. The manner in which Ovid's *Heroides* was so much part of early modern education – 'you absorbed Ovid, not perhaps with your mother's milk, but at any rate with your school master's rod' – meant that identification with classical personae was by no means necessarily a matter of

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<sup>10</sup> Wroth, 1995, pp. 492-495, Scholar Press facsimile, pp. 418-420. Identified by Roberts as U35. For a comparison between U35 and various letters from *Heroides*, see Katherine Jo Smith, pp. 90-92.

<sup>11</sup> Farabaugh, p. 215



gender.<sup>12</sup> The *Heroides* provided models for the school-boy practice of the *prosopopoeia*, in which boys were expected to find the rhetoric suitable for female speakers and their plight; Dorolina parodies this *prosopopoeia* in her complaint by her identification with not one, but a string of heroines. Critics have made the mistake of privileging the possibility of links with the *Heroides* over the *Metamorphoses* in Wroth's work because the former performs a female voice, forgetting that this type of female voice was, in the early modern period, primarily authored by men.<sup>13</sup> It was not unusual nor was it seen as transgressive for male poets to write female-voiced complaint, since the female voice, in Ovid's hands, had become the rhetoric of a situation made available predominantly to men through their education. For this reason it is unnecessary to suppose that Wroth's identification of Pamphilia's struggle with that of Theseus in the labyrinth would be any more transgressive than her decision to write amatory verse already was. In fact, the key to the *corona* is Wroth's transformation of Ovid's fickle Theseus into the constant Pamphilia. While Theseus escapes the maze only to desert Ariadne, Pamphilia is the improved version of a hero, and will never desert her lover. By adapting the classical exemplar, Wroth teaches virtue. Wroth's divergence from her Ovidian authority is to teach a lesson in how to love and how not to love. The *corona*, rather than an extended complaint, is a meditation on constant love in which Pamphilia exhorts the reader to eschew jealousy and love virtuously. Therefore, we see Wroth's precise and faithful,

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<sup>12</sup> Laurence Lerner, "Ovid and the Elizabethans", *Ovid Renewed*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 122.

<sup>13</sup> For female-voiced complaint as a male-authored genre, see Danielle Clarke, "'Formd into words by your divided lips' Women, Rhetoric, and the Ovidian Tradition", *This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England*, ed. by Danielle Clarke and Elizabeth Clarke (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p. 16.

yet also transforming, use of Ovid's tale, used as part of a narrative progression that teaches constancy.

### 3.3 The Fallen Complainant

The identification of Pamphilia with Theseus and not with Ariadne raises a number of important questions: can Pamphilia's voice be separated from that of Ariadne? Does Wroth construct Pamphilia as a deserted woman, and therefore strongly associated with the genre of female-voiced complaint? Is the difference between the moral exemplar and the complainant great enough to draw the distinction I have suggested? Does the gender of the voice that Wroth has constructed preclude a difference? Robyn Bolan has suggested that Pamphilia's position as an abandoned and fallen woman makes her voice unlike that of a Neo-Petrarchan lover: 'Nor is the object of desire chastely unobtainable, as was the usual Petrarchan beloved. Like Shakespeare's Dark Lady, he is only unattainable to the speaker because he is lavishing his favours temporarily on others.'<sup>14</sup> I maintain that – in the 1621 printed version – this is not the case. If the sonnet sequence is read as a whole and in the context of its printed presentation, though Wroth engages intelligently with the genre of female-voiced complaint and includes several examples of it in the *Urania* and sonnet sequence, the sequence as a whole should not be viewed as an example of the rhetoric of complaint, but instead

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<sup>14</sup> Robyn Bolam, "The Heart of the Labyrinth: Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 293.

of exemplarity.<sup>15</sup> Danielle Clarke has discussed Wroth's engagement with complaint, her engagement with Ovid's *Heroides*, and the challenges a woman writer faced in using a rhetoric that, though nominally female, was an occupied male space.<sup>16</sup> Clare R. Kinney and Jami Ake have argued that Wroth uses representations of female companionship to disrupt the voyeurism of a traditional complaint narrative and to create the possibility of escape from the traditional fate of the complainant.<sup>17</sup> I argue that Wroth's engagement with the tropes of female-voiced complaint is also designed to differentiate the voice of Pamphilia from the rhetoric of that tradition.

The first song of the sequence, P7 – in which the speaker Pamphilia observes a shepherdess, whose complaint takes up much of the poem – is not only a complaint but also an example of an Ovidian transformation (the shepherdess decks herself with willow branches and floral embroidery in a manner that evokes transformation into a tree).<sup>18</sup> Bell argues that the complaint, although designated as being voiced by a shepherdess, is indirectly voiced by Pamphilia to Amphilanthus (whom Bell identifies with Wroth and Herbert), and argues that this connection is revealed by the similarities between the shepherdess' behaviour and Pamphilia's in *Urania* 1:94, when Pamphilia too engraves a sonnet on a tree.<sup>19</sup> Margaret Simon

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<sup>15</sup> John Kerrigan mentions Wroth's use of complaint in *Motives of Woe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), pp. 52-53.

<sup>16</sup> Clarke, 2000, pp. 78-85.

<sup>17</sup> Jami Ake, "Mary Wroth's Willow Poetics", *Crossing Boundaries: Issues of Cultural and Individual Identities in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Sally McKee (Turnhout: Brepolis, 1999), pp. 127-151; Clare R. Kinney, "Mary Wroth Romances Ovid: Refiguring Metamorphosis and Complaint in *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*", *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing*, Part III, ed. by Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 203-313.

<sup>18</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P7, pp. 208-209.

<sup>19</sup> Ilona Bell, "A too curious secrecie': Wroth's Pastoral Song and 'Urania'" *Sidney Journal*, 31, 1 (2013), p. 34. Here Bell refers to the manuscript version of the song, but there are no significant changes between the two so her argument remains relevant.

reads the shepherdess as an expression of Wroth's own anxiety about how her work will be interpreted.<sup>20</sup> Ake suggests that Wroth takes another role in the complaint, that of the observer, the sympathetic fellow poet who will rightly understand the shepherdess' epitaph; but while Pamphilia is a sympathetic audience for the shepherdess, Pamphilia does not follow her towards death.<sup>21</sup> Rather than representing a straightforward mouthpiece for Pamphilia, the complaining shepherdess offers an attractive but cautionary tale, which, like the figure of Echo explored in the previous chapter, Pamphilia observes and avoids. The narrative of the sequence from this first song to the final sonnet of the sequence (P103) where Pamphilia is still alive and still constant represents a rejection of the speaking position of the despairing complainant.

Line Cottegnies has argued that Wroth's sonnet sequence is closely linked to Sappho's epistle in the *Heroides*, and that like that epistle, the sequence is a public performance of shame, guilt, and loss.<sup>22</sup> Cottegnies' reading of the sonnets has the effect of presenting the sequence as an extended complaint, which, although unusual in form, bears many of the features associated with the female-voiced complaint tradition. Cottegnies argues that the sequence is 'explicitly about consummation and its aftermaths'.<sup>23</sup> The Petrarchan lover is 'displaced by the 'Ovidian shameful subject, who is revised and de-eroticised', and the sonnets 'exemplify [...] the metamorphosis of the hapless "she" into a paradoxically powerful female

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<sup>20</sup> Margaret Simon, "Mary Wroth's Ephemeral Epitaph", *Studies in English Literature*, 56, 1 (2016), pp. 45-69.

<sup>21</sup> Ake, "Mary Wroth's Willow Poetics", pp. 131-136.

<sup>22</sup> Line Cottegnies, "The Sapphic Context of Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, ed. by Susan Wiseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 63-69.

<sup>23</sup> Cottegnies, p. 69.

subject who ostentatiously turns her weakness into a mode of assertion.’<sup>24</sup> The movement from weakness to strength is typical of complaint, in which the complainant often develops from repentance and despair, to become a model of patient suffering. If Pamphilia is indeed depicted as a repentant fallen woman, who has been abandoned, despairs, and yearns for death, then the sequence as a whole must be considered a formally anomalous female-voiced complaint, or at least a work that employs the role and rhetoric of the complainant as a speaking position for its female voice. I believe that the sequence in its 1621 print incarnation (the manuscript may tell a different story, as Ilona Bell has argued) is not about consummation, and certainly not ‘explicitly so’ as Cottegnies argues.<sup>25</sup> With its slippery syntax, very little in the sequence can be called explicit, and the questions of whether Pamphilia is a fallen woman, or indeed an abandoned one are, as I will show in this chapter, difficult to answer. I argue that while Pamphilia draws near to the role of the complainant, it is – like the figure of Echo examined in the previous chapter – a role she ultimately rejects.

Rather than the voice of an abandoned female-voiced complainant, the voice which opens the sequence is strongly evocative of that of the courtly lover, who loves from a distance and hopes that he (or in this case, she) will be rewarded with some kind of return. P2 describes the beloved’s eyes, which are rather conventionally likened to suns and stars.<sup>26</sup> The relationship between the lover and beloved is still, at this early stage of the sequence, only a potential relationship for which the lover hopes. The eyes are ‘The loved

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<sup>24</sup> Cottegnies, p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> On the eroticism of the Folger manuscript, and changes made to obfuscate this in print, see Bell, “‘Joy’s Sports’: The Unexpurgated Text of Mary Wroth’s Pamphilia to Amphilanthus”, *Modern Philology*, 111, 2 (2013), pp. 231-252.

<sup>26</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P2, pp. 205-206.

place of sought for triumphs' (line 3) and 'Kinde nursing fires for wishes yet unborne' (line 8).<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that Pamphilia has already become a lover in P1, and this status is not contingent on reciprocity from Amphilanthus. In P2, though the relationship has not yet begun, and Pamphilia remains in a state of hope, the beloved is already depicted as an ambivalent and changeable figure. In a move evocative of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18, Pamphilia compares the beloved to an April morning:

How may they terme you *Aprills* sweetest morne?

When pleasing looks, from those bright lights appeare

A Sunne-shine day, from clowdes, and mists still cleare:

Kind nursing fires for wishes yet unborne. (lines 5-8)

Pamphilia seems to answer her own question by saying that the 'Deare eyes' are like but unlike an April's morning. The changeable weather of April and the beauty of the sun suddenly emerging from 'clowdes, and mists', are likened to the 'pleasing looks' from those eyes, that have a warming and enticing effect as 'Kind nursing fires for wishes yet unborne'. The image suggests these 'pleasing looks' though beautiful are rare and temporary, like April sunshine through rain. Wroth's 'still' (line 7) emphasises the ephemerality of this favour. What is being depicted is the very moment before change. Yet Wroth does not continue with this image, showing that in some ways the beloved is unlike the April morning and 'How may they' has

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<sup>27</sup> In the manuscript sequence line 3 reads 'the loved place of Cupids triumph's neere', and no punctuation is offered to tie 'neere' to the following line. The phrase, while still suggesting a potential relationship, is far more evocative of an erotic relationship soon to be consummated. The print sonnet's 'sought for' leaves a doubt as to whether these triumphs will be achieved, or indeed what exactly they are.

already invited the reader to doubt this identification. What follows is a more glorious but more violent image, suggesting that ‘they’ mentioned earlier have underestimated Pamphilia’s beloved:

Two Starres of Heaven sent downe to grace the Earth,  
Plac’d in that Throne which gives all joyes their birth,  
Shining, and burning; pleasing yet their Charmes:

Which wounding even in hurts are deem’d delights;  
So pleasant is their force, so great their mights,  
As happy they can triumph in their harmes. (lines 9-14)

The image is more grandiose and cosmic, and more unattainable, than the sweet but mundane image of the April morning, or indeed that of the Summer’s day. The image of the eye-stars recalls not only Stella, but also the shining gods who destroyed Phaeton and Semele when they drew too close to their ‘burning’ and ‘wounding’ power. Wroth executes what Kinney calls ‘turn and counterturn’ and identifies as a particularly Wrothian technique: in the last four lines of the sonnet, the move the volta appears to make is again subverted.<sup>28</sup> Lines 11 and 12 introduce the theme of pleasure in pain to the sequence. The peculiar word order of line 11 creates a symmetrical structure to the two lines which oppose pain and pleasure. The word order of line 11 also has the effect of casting doubt onto the speaker’s assertion that the

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<sup>28</sup> Clare R. Kinney, “Turn and Counterturn”, *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine Larson, Naomi Miller, and Andrew Strycharski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 85-102.

'burning' is pleasurable. The half-line 'pleasing yet their Charmes' appears metrically underwhelming compared to the start of the line (which begins with a trochee) and is weak and unconvincing. Immediately 'Charmes' is undermined on the next line by 'Which wounding'. In line 12 Pamphilia does not even claim these wounds are delightful, but states emphatically with alliteration that they are 'deem'd delights'. This raises the question by whom are they so deemed? Perhaps the 'they' who likened the beloved to the April morning. Then the counterturn comes and suggests that it might also be the beloved himself who insists on this delightfulness. The double meaning of happy as either fortunate or joyful opens up the possibility for the poem to end with an image of the beloved's sadism. The eyes are 'happy they can triumph in their harmes' suggesting that the delight may not, as the sonnet previously lead the reader to believe, lie in the observer's experience of the eyes, but in his own delight in the effect of his burning gaze. The beloved, Amphilanthus, is depicted in the cruel and fair, unattainable sonnet mistress (in this case master). The dynamic between Pamphilia as lover and Amphilanthus as the changeable, cruel and distant beloved is established in a sonnet that carefully makes clear that a relationship is still only 'sought for'. Pamphilia's tortured experience and Amphilanthus' changefulness is therefore not dependent on an act of abandonment but exists as a dynamic in which Wroth characterises Pamphilia as sonnet lover, not abandoned complainant. By positioning Pamphilia as seeking requital from Amphilanthus, rather than regretting abandonment, Wroth characterises her speaker in Petrarchan terms as the lover who is wooing an unattainable object. Amphilanthus' changefulness is essential to the dynamic because it



ensures the impossibility of consummation: an important ingredient in courtship.

The addition of P4 to the print sequence, which replaces a sort of aetiological sonnet on Cupid's obedience to Venus, continues this emphasis on Pamphilia's hopes and Amphilanthus' ambivalence and changefulness. The typically erotic language of this sonnet is certainly concerned with desire, but not with consummation.

Forbeare darke night, my joyes now budd againe,  
Lately growne dead, while cold aspects, did chill  
The roote at heart, and my chiefe hope quite kill,  
And thunders strooke me in my pleasure's waine. (Lines 1-4)<sup>29</sup>

Kinney comments upon the image of the 'roote at heart', reading it as suggestive of 'an essential core with a core of its own'.<sup>30</sup> This image of interiority contributes to the motif of Pamphilia as a receptacle or vessel that runs throughout the sequence. Kinney dismisses the rest of the flower imagery here as merely conventional but this imagery is important, as it serves a vital role in defining the lexicon of the sequence. Pamphilia describes herself as if a tree, evocative of, though not specifically, an Ovidian lover transformed. In recent times the tree has been lifeless (as deciduous trees appear in winter), frozen to the very root, and in this terrible state, it was struck by a storm, but the tree is now budding again. The cold gaze of the beloved – whose eyes have remained the constant topic of the last two

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<sup>29</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P4, pp. 206-207.

<sup>30</sup> Kinney, "Turn and Counterturn", p. 90.

sonnets – are the owners of the ‘cold aspects’, that brought on this winter to Pamphilia’s ‘joyes’. Words like ‘joyes’ and ‘pleasure’ combined with imagery of ‘budd[ing]’ – a common vehicle for a discussion of female sexuality – might lead a reader towards an interpretation of the poem as one that narrates a past sexual relationship. The ‘best days, in former time I knew’ (referred to in line 11) are now recommencing after a period of neglect. However, in the midst of this potentially erotic language, Wroth suggests that the joy that is being chilled and killed is hope. The neglect or cruelty of the beloved ‘chill / The roote at heart, and my chiefe hope quite kill’. Hope is nestled in between the natural imagery of the root and the thunder, and like the ‘cold aspects’ provides an anchor which ties the natural imagery into the love narrative. The inclusion of this sonnet encourages the appearances of buds and joy in the rest of the sequence to be read as hope of returned affections rather than as physical consummation.

The language Wroth uses in the sonnets invites multiple readings and re-readings so that language that supports an argument for an erotic reading may be deployed by a different critic to support a religious interpretation. Given the contemporaneous demonization of women who were sexually active outside marriage, it seems unlikely that Pamphilia was presented both as a fallen woman and a teacher, and moral exemplar. The dynamic in P65 between Pamphilia and Amphilanthus has been understood by some readers as overtly sexual; however, the sonnet is in fact more concerned with the imaginary. The sonnet begins in praise of love before moving on to discuss jealousy. The early celebration of Night as a guardian for lovers provides rich pickings for an erotic reading.

Most blessed night, the happy time for Love,  
The shade for Lovers, and their Loves delight,  
The raigne of Love for servants free from spight,  
The hopefull seasons for joyes sports to moove. (Lines 1-4)<sup>31</sup>

A quotation from line 4 provides the title for Bell's 2013 article, in which she presents an argument for the sequence – in its manuscript incarnation – to be read as a narrative and erotic depiction of a sexual relationship.<sup>32</sup> Indeed P65 is one of a few poems in the printed text which lends itself to an erotic reading. In this poem Night not only shades lovers, but also 'their Loves delight'; the interpretation of 'Loves delight' as anything other than the physical act is made difficult by the addition of 'joyes sports' and by the night time setting. However, in the context of the wider sequence, as it appears in print, this erotic interpretation seems out of place. Kinney suggests the sonnet 'sits uneasily within the sequence' as clearly denoting physical consummation:

Although we have the familiar lack of pronominal specificity (there is no I, me, he, or you in its space) [...] Such explicitness might raise eyebrows, especially if we read the poem by way of the *Urania*, or rather by way of the fiction that *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* represents the literary productions of Wroth's heroine: in the romance, Pamphilia is repeatedly lauded for her chastity as well as her

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<sup>31</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P65, p. 244.

<sup>32</sup> Ilona Bell, "'Joy's Sports': The Unexpurgated Text of Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus", *Modern Philology*, 111 (2013), pp. 231-252.

constancy. Should we rather turn to a biographical reading and find here a Wroth who shatters the Pamphilia-mask, unable to resist celebrating her own consummated affair with William Herbert?<sup>33</sup>

Kinney's chapter is concerned with the experience of reading Wroth's poetry, and how a reading of each individual sonnet cannot be reached without reading the whole, as the final 'counterturn' of each sonnet forces the reader to reassess the whole. Kinney offers a reading of P65 in which Pamphilia praises Night for its ability to close her eyes to her own jealousy, and as a servant to Love, does not have to engage in joy's sports to approve of Night's guardianship of them.<sup>34</sup> Kinney then goes on to posit the idea that two readings exist simultaneously in the space of the sonnet: one, in which Pamphilia speaks, characterises night as a servant of Love, but the speaker remains chaste; and another in which Wroth speaks about her affair with William Herbert. I have quoted Kinney at length here because I think this dramatization of the experience of reading P65 speaks to an important interpretive crux: the sequence cannot be understood sufficiently if it is read as a stand-alone work because it is not presented as such. A key part of Wroth's presentation of the 1621 printed *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* is that it is appended to her romance *The Countess of Montgomerie's Urania*.<sup>35</sup> In this format, the reader is invited to imagine the Pamphilia of the romance as the speaker of the sonnet sequence. This consideration eases the interpretation of a sonnet like P65, because it must be read according to

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<sup>33</sup> Kinney, "Turn and Counterturn", p. 91.

<sup>34</sup> Kinney, "Turn and Counterturn", pp. 92-93.

<sup>35</sup> There is no scholarly consensus that the speaker of the sonnets must be read as the Pamphilia of *Urania*. Bolam argues that the sequence need not be read as if voiced by the Pamphilia of the romance, p. 288.

Kinney's first option, in which Pamphilia's abstract support of Love's ability to shelter lovers (rather than specifically her own love affair) is congruent with her character in *Urania* as a figure who supports and facilitates matches among her friends, leaving no need to impose Wroth's own biography on a sonnet that sustains its own meaning within the printed text.<sup>36</sup>

In P65 Wroth transforms the tale of Argus from the *Metamorphoses* from a violent and cruel story of jealousy to a lesson on constancy. Argus, the hundred-eyed herdsman is ordered by Juno to guard Io, whom she rightly suspects is not a cow at all but a transformed young woman with whom her husband has been dallying. Deciding it would be the decent thing to do to rescue Io and return her to her human form, Jupiter sends Mercury to kill Argus. Mercury approaches dressed as a rustic, and plays his pipe to Argus, lulling him to sleep. Argus asks about his instrument and Mercury is about to tell him the story of Pan's pursuit of Syrinx (the pipe is Syrinx transformed into a reed), but soon almost all Argus' eyes are asleep and Mercury magically closes the last one with his wand, then he kills him. In P65 Night takes the role of Mercury, but exceeds him in ability to close eyes:

Now hast thou made thy glory higher proove,  
Then did the God, whose pleasant Reede did smite  
All *Argus* eyes into a death-like night,  
Till they were safe, that none could Love reprove (5-8).

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<sup>36</sup> This view of Pamphilia is paralleled in Wroth's depiction of Silvesta in the Penshurst manuscript of *Love's Victory*. Silvesta has sworn off men due to a disappointment in love. However, during the action of the play she becomes Venus' servant by plotting to facilitate a love match between Musella and Philisses. She gives them a potion that acts like poison, keeping them in a death-like state until everyone is reconciled to their marriage.

Just as Mercury's murder of Argus releases Io from her guardian, so Night shields lovers from prying eyes. Night is, therefore, called 'the happy time for Love' (1). Wroth ends the sonnet with an interesting inversion:

Now thou hast cloasd those eyes from prying sight  
That nourish Jealousie, more then joyes right,  
While vaine Suspition fosters their mistrust,  
  
Making sweet sleepe to master all suspect,  
Which els their private feares would not neglect,  
But would embrace both blinded, and unjust (9-14).

As well as providing 'shade' and 'season' for lovers' and their 'sports' (2, 4), Night also saves them from themselves: Night makes 'sweet sleepe' which calms both suspicions and 'feares'. Therefore Night not only closes the eyes of guards, authority figures, and those hostile to the lovers, like Mercury, it also closes the eyes of the lovers themselves who are more blind when their eyes are open and they 'embrace both' 'private feares' and 'mistrust'. In Ovid Argus' death and the end of the observation of Io does not lead to her partaking in the activities of a lover, nor is it her own jealousy she is escaping. Argus' watch is, figuratively speaking, a manifestation of Juno's jealousy. Wroth's emphasis on jealousy shifts the focus to Juno. The blinding of Argus, then, becomes almost a kindness to Juno, whose fears and suspicions are put to rest because she is prevented in her observation. Pamphilia, who often aligns herself with night, urges Juno towards a similar course, avoiding

jealousy and mistrust. However, the central section of the sonnet (quoted above) makes reference to Ovid's text (below), but is interestingly selective.

Talia dicturus vidit Cyllenius omnes  
subcubuisse oculos adopertaque lumina somno;  
supprimit extemplo vocem firmitque soporem  
languida permulcens medicata lumina virga.  
Nec mora, falcato nutantem vulnerat ense,  
qua collo est confine caput, saxoque cruentum  
deicit et maculat praeruptam sanguine rupem.  
Arge, iaces, quodque in tot lumina lumen habebas,  
exstinctum est, centumque oculos nox occupat una (I.712-720).<sup>37</sup>

But as Cyllenius would have told this tale, he cast his sight  
On Argus. And behold, his eyes had bid him all good-night.  
There was not one that did not sleep, and fast he gan to nod.  
Immediately he ceased his talk and with his charmèd rod  
So strokèd all his heavy eyes that earnestly they slept.  
Then with his woodknife by and by he lightly to him stepped  
And lent him such a perilous blow whereas the shoulders grew  
Unto the neck that straight his head quite from the body flew.  
Then tumbling down the headlong hill his bloody corse he sent,  
That all the way by which he rolled was stainedèd and besprent.  
There li'st thou, Argus, under foot with all thy hundred lights,

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<sup>37</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 52.

And all the light is clean extinct that was within those sights;  
One endless night thy hundred eyes hath now bereft for aye.<sup>38</sup>

Wroth's linkage of the closing of Argus' eyes to night comes straight out of Ovid's text (line 720), but oddly Wroth attaches the word 'smite' to Mercury's 'pleasant reed', rather than the blade that he uses to wound Argus in Ovid. In fact, in Ovid, Mercury's assassination of Argus has three stages: firstly most of his eyes are lulled to sleep with the Pan pipe (i.e. the 'reed'), secondly Mercury uses his wand to charm the last eye, and finally the god does indeed 'smite' Argus with a blade. Wroth's privileging of the first stage of the murder, the pipe, is highlighted by her incongruous verb choice. The action 'Smite' would more naturally be connected with a blade or weapon than a musical instrument, therefore reminding the reader of Ovid's treatment of this story, thus demonstrating that Wroth had other choices of murder weapons here, and indicates that Ovid's rendering of the story of Syrinx informed her choice. Seeking to escape Pan, Syrinx is transformed into reeds. Pan makes her his own despite this transformation:

Panaque cum prensam sibi iam Syringa putaret,  
corpore pro nymphae calamos tenuisse palustres,  
dumque ibi suspirat, motos in harundine ventos  
effecisse sonum tenuem similemque querenti.  
Arte nova vocisque deum dulcedine captum  
"hoc mihi colloquium tecum" dixisse "manebit,"

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<sup>38</sup> Golding, pp. 56-57.



atque ita disparibus calamis compagine cerae  
inter se iunctis nomen tenuisse puellae (I.705-712).<sup>39</sup>

And how, when Pan between his arms to catch the nymph had  
thought,  
Instead of her he caught the reeds new grown upon the brook,  
And as he sighèd with his breath the reeds he softly shook  
Which made a still and mourning noise, with strangeness of the which  
And sweetness of the feeble sound the god, delighted much,  
Said, “Certes, Syrinx, for thy sake it is my full intent  
To make my comfort of these reeds wherein thou dost lament;”  
And how that there of sundry reeds with wax together knit  
He made the pipe which of her name the Greeks call Syrinx yet.<sup>40</sup>

Though Syrinx is transformed, the reeds’ voice retains her attributes as they are ‘querenti’ (mourning or complaining) her fate. Ovid’s description of the sweet and slim voice of the reed evokes the physicality of a beautiful nymph. Therefore, it is a female song that lulls the eyes of Argus closed. Wroth emphasises the power of the female voice in this sonnet, as a means to closing one’s eyes to mistrust and jealousy. The supernatural voice of Syrinx becomes elided with the female speaker of the poem, thus positioning Pamphilia’s poetry as a cure to negative feelings of jealousy and mistrust. Importantly, that voice is a chaste voice – Syrinx’ flight and transformation are a bid to preserve her chastity – adding further weight to the argument

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<sup>39</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 52.

<sup>40</sup> Golding, p. 56.

that Pamphilia does not engage in ‘joyes sports’. As in P97 (discussed in the previous chapter) Pamphilia provides an example for Juno to follow.

In this section I have argued that Pamphilia is not presented as a fallen woman but as a chaste and exemplary voice of authority. However, though a popular feature of early modern female-voiced complaint, the idea that the complainant must be ‘fallen’ is not a necessity.<sup>41</sup> Ovid’s *Heroides* includes an epistle from Penelope who is not a fallen woman, but a chaste wife awaiting her husband’s return.<sup>42</sup> Penelope in *Heroides* presents herself as an exemplar of constancy and, also like Pamphilia, suffers from jealous imaginings about what her husband might be up to. Might not Penelope be a model for Pamphilia? Penelope imagines Ulysses to be unfaithful, but then reproaches herself, hoping that this is just the product of her imagination:

Whatever dangers the deep contains, whatever the land, suspicion  
tells me are cause of your long delay. While I live on in foolish fear of  
things like these, you may be captive to a stranger love—such are the  
hearts of you men! It may be you even tell how rustic a wife you have—  
one fit only to dress fine the wool. May I be mistaken, and this charge  
of mine be found slight as the breeze that blows, and may it not be  
that, free to return, you will to be away!<sup>43</sup>

Penelope hopes that her suspicions are as unsubstantial as ‘the breeze’, but the epistle is laden with dramatic irony, because the reader or listener who

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<sup>41</sup> Heather Dubrow, “A Mirror for Complaints: Shakespeare’s Lucrece and the Generic Tradition”, *Renaissance Genres: Essays on Theory, History, and Interpretation*, ed. by Barbara Kiefer Lewalski (London: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 103-130.

<sup>42</sup> “Penelope to Ulysses” is the first letter in *Heroides*: Ovid, *Heroides*, pp. 10-97.

<sup>43</sup> Ovid, *Heroides*, pp. 16-17.

know's Homer's *Odysseus* is aware that her husband is indeed 'captive to a stranger love'. Jealousy and a struggle to reject jealousy is one of the dramas that plays out across the sequence (for example, Pamphilia is overtaken by jealousy in P20, P66, P100, but overcomes it in P27, P62, P69, and P97).

Pamphilia too accuses herself of an overactive imagination. In P11 Pamphilia likens her relief at finding herself misled to the 'joy' a 'weary Traveller' finds in 'home'.<sup>44</sup> In Ovidian style the simile takes up a great deal more space than the object of description, which is not clearly revealed until the final couplet: 'Truth saith 'twas wrong conceit bred my despight, / Which once acknowledg'd, brings my hearts delight.' The alliterative closing couplet make the journey from 'despight' to 'delight' seem swift, though the distance travelled between these two emotions is great. In this way Wroth captures the intangible moment of a metamorphosis in thought. As is so often the case in Wroth's writing, there is a certain degree of ambiguity: in whose mind did the wrong conceit exist? Does 'my despight' indicate that Pamphilia was disdaining or being disdained? And whose acknowledgement of this error brings 'delight' to Pamphilia's heart? These instabilities leave the lines open to narrative interpretations that speak of scandals and misinformation. However, the speed of the lines, the repetition of 'my' in the couplet, and the fact that 'conceit', 'despight', 'acknowledged', and 'delight' are all concerned with thought or emotion, suggest that this action all goes on within Pamphilia's head. Pamphilia is labouring under what she may already know to be a wrong conceit, leading her to 'despight'. Whether Pamphilia is wrongfully being scornful, or wrongfully being scorned becomes irrelevant as

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<sup>44</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P11, pp. 211-212.

both are causes for internal turmoil. However, once she is able to acknowledge that these are merely thoughts, Pamphilia brings about her own happiness. The sonnet is about self-mastery, rather than the narrative of some complicated scandal. Wroth's evocative description of this moment of epiphany creates a similar effect to (although does not clearly allude to) the way in which Penelope's misgivings disappear into thin air. The suspicions of Ulysses' wife return within a line, but Pamphilia's jealousy does not return until a later sonnet. Both, however, suffer similarly at the hands of famously changeable men. While the situations of the two characters differ (I will argue in the next section that Pamphilia, unlike Penelope, is not abandoned) the wise and chaste Penelope might be considered as an intriguing literary forerunner or exemplar for Pamphilia.<sup>45</sup>

### 3.4 The Abandoned Complainant

As we have seen from the figure of Penelope, it is possible for Pamphilia to be both an exemplar of constancy and a complainant. However, the female-voiced complaint does require its speaker to be abandoned. Although she bemoans the absence of her lover at several points, if the relationship between Pamphilia and Amphilanthus has not yet begun (as I argue at the start of this chapter), she cannot be abandoned. Pamphilia does, however, suffer from her beloved's absence. This suffering is not maintained

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<sup>45</sup> Since the relationship between the constant Penelope and Ulysses is also an important one for *Astrophil and Stella*, and Odysseus' epithet *polytropos* invites parallels with Amphilanthus, the importance of the figure of Penelope in Wroth's characterisation of Pamphilia may be worth further exploration. For the connections between *Astrophil and Stella* and Homer's *Odyssey*, see Dieter Fuchs, "'Poor Penelope. Penelope Rich': Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* as a Prototype for the Rewriting of the Odysseus Myth in *Ulysses*", *James Joyce Quarterly*, 48, 2 (2011), pp. 350-356.

throughout the sequence, and therefore she cannot be characterised as complaining throughout the sequence. I will begin by identifying the moments in which Pamphilia is characterised as bemoaning the beloved's absence, and then move on to how Wroth deviates from this role in her presentation of the sonnet speaker as courting a state of acceptance (rather than the beloved). Poems P22 and P23 mourn the absence of the beloved through the image of the absence of the sun.<sup>46</sup> The personified trees in P22 mourning the absence of Summer behave as if they are metamorphosed women, a technique which foreshadows Wroth's reference to the Phaeton story in P25.<sup>47</sup> Sonnet P22 begins with Pamphilia's exhortation to Night and her identification with Night as 'becomming [her] sorrow best', describing herself as one 'Whom absence power doth from mirth controule' (line 4).<sup>48</sup> Not only is the darkness of night in sympathy with Pamphilia, so too are the trees, who, 'with hanging heads condole / Sweet Summers parting' (lines 5-6). They express their grief in their 'dying colours' (line 7), and by letting their leaves fall (lines 6, 9-10):

Their fall, their branches, all their mournings prove,  
 With leavelesse naked bodies, whose hues vade  
 From hopeful greene to wither in their love. (lines 10-12)

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<sup>46</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P22, p. 218, P23, pp. 218-219.

<sup>47</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P25, pp. 219-220.

<sup>48</sup> Bell notes 'Wroth wrote in the Kohler copy of *Urania* "For absence." If she intended this as an alternate reading, "sorrow" in line 1 of this sonnet lamenting absence is perhaps the best candidate for interpolation.' Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, p. 218n. It is unlikely that the annotation 'For absence' suggests an intended interpolation for 'sorrow'. The positioning of the note on the page in the left margin near the top of the sonnet looks more like a possible title. Perhaps the note indicates an intended repurposing of the poem.

The leaves of the trees are imagined as clothes ('of leaves distress' line 6), and as they are cast aside in grief, the trees are left with 'naked bodies', adding to the personification. Wroth's pun here plays with the complaint trope that connects female distress with female undressing. In their communal mourning the trees are at once reminiscent of the bodies of the Heliades, transformed into poplar trees, and of the subjects of a female-voiced complaint. Though they do not speak, the trees mime the role of complainants. Their 'naked bodies' become the erotic objects of gaze that Kerrigan describes as characteristic of the female-voiced complainant.<sup>49</sup> The final couplet compares the state of the trees to that of Pamphilia, 'If trees, and leaves for absence mourners be, / No marvel that I grieve, who like want see.' The characterisation of the trees as complainants is also passed on to Pamphilia. In this and other individual sonnets and songs, Wroth's speaker seems to display the characteristics of the abandoned, complaining woman. However, Pamphilia's state as abandoned, and as complaining, is not a fixed feature of the sequence. A run of sonnets in which Pamphilia draws close to this role is often followed by a sonnet in which she powerfully resists it. For example, P22 (as we have seen) and the two sonnets which follow it bemoan the beloved's absence, but P25 – one of the most powerful of Wroth's sonnets – sees the speaker transformed into an exemplar of acceptance.

Wroth's P25, 'Like to the Indians, scorched with the Sunne,' gets much attention as a reference to the poet's appearance in Ben Jonson's *Masque of Blackness* written for Anne of Denmark and performed in 1605. The sonnet is also clearly a reference to the tale of Phaeton, from *Metamorphoses* book

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<sup>49</sup> Kerrigan, p. 64.

II, in which he visits his father the god Apollo to seek proof of his parentage. Apollo makes an oath to give his son anything he requests, but the son asks to drive his father's fiery chariot through the sky. Apollo begs his son to reconsider, but as he has sworn an oath he must grant the request. This gift, as Apollo foresees, destroys Phaeton who loses control of the chariot and scorches the earth (giving the Ethiopians black skins) until he is struck from the chariot by Jupiter's thunderbolt. Phaeton is mourned by his sisters who turn into poplar trees. This Ovidian reference does not lessen the evidence of Wroth's interaction with contemporary trends; in fact it adds evidence for the strength of this connection.<sup>50</sup> Jonson's masque clearly draws on this idea of the origin of blackness. The daughters of Niger seek to reverse their blackness in order to be fair. The idea of an ugliness in blackness had been challenged by the Egyptian queen in *Antony and Cleopatra* who employs this discourse of scorching but sees it as evidence of desirability. Cleopatra, demanding 'Think on me, / That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black', also attributes blackness to proximity to the sun's rays, but is not an undesirable scorching.<sup>51</sup> Instead the Egyptian queen claims it is because she is so adorable that the sun himself cannot resist her, drawing on the sexualised perception of blackness in early modern thought. Wroth's speaker also brings love into the equation, though less erotically than Cleopatra.

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<sup>50</sup> Kim Hall argues that Wroth employs the image of blackness in the *Urania* both to communicate sexually transgressive desire, and to differentiate and elevate the white women. This interpretation can be transferred to P25 in which Wroth suggests a clear analogy between Pamphilia and the 'Indians' while maintaining Pamphilia's superiority: Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 177-210. For the contemporary fascination with, and sexualisation of, blackness see also Carol Chillington Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 90-100; Anu Korhonen, "Washing the Ethiopian White: Conceptualising Black Skin in Renaissance England", *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, ed. by Thomas Foster Earle and K.J.P. Lowe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 94-112.

<sup>51</sup> Shakespeare, "Antony and Cleopatra", 1.5.27-28.

Pamphilia's unchanging whiteness, contrasting to the sunburnt Indians, reminds the reader of her chastity and constant virtue. The sun, for Pamphilia, is Love, whom she worships, and she has been scorched by this proximity.

Like to the Indians scorched with the Sunne,  
The Sunne which they doe as their God adore:  
So am I us'd by Love, for evermore  
I worship him, lesse favours have I wonne. (1-4)<sup>52</sup>

Wroth's reference to 'Indians' may have been inspired by Pocahontas, who came to London in 1616 and attended Jonson's *Vision of Delight*, but an interest in 'blackness' was already a feature of the Jacobean court before her arrival.<sup>53</sup> Wroth's choice of the designate 'Indian' does not negate a connection to the story of Phaeton, as the nationalities connected to blackness seem to have been freely interchangeable in the Jacobean court. The idea of proximity to the sun and blackness is not the only correlation between Wroth's sonnet and the Phaeton story. Central to this sonnet is the idea of a negative correlation between expectation and receipt. The same can be said of the Phaeton story: the idea of asking for a boon and receiving the opposite is integral to Phaeton's tale: the favour his father shows him kills him. The inversions Wroth uses to capture this idea ('evermore / I worship him, lesse favours have I wonne' and 'Nor can have hope, but to see hopes undone') parallel Apollo's regret of his own oath in 'Paenituit iurasse patrem'

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<sup>52</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P25, pp. 219-220.

<sup>53</sup> Quilligan, p. 169.



(II.49).<sup>54</sup> Wroth and other early modern sonneteers strive for this kind of neatness. Emphatic through alliteration, the use of ‘patrem’, meaning father and head of the household, here rather than ‘genitor’ (which means begetter, and has been used twice previously in the story) emphasises the authority of Apollo’s role, rather than its mere mechanics, and therefore strengthens the authority of his oath. As a ‘pater’ Apollo is not only the sperm donor, but has also acknowledged and taken responsibility for his son – something Phaeton wanted – making his oath more grave, more binding, and therefore more painful.

Wroth’s simile, ‘Like to the Indians’, points out more strongly the differences than the similarities between Pamphilia’s case and that of those Indians, and the Ethiopians of the *Metamorphoses*. The speaker wishes that her colour should be changed by love to mark her as its victim and devotee:

Better are they who thus to blacknesse run,  
And so can onely whitenesse want deplore:  
Then I who pale and white am with griefes store,  
Nor can have hope, but to see hopes undone.

Besides their sacrifice receiv’d in sight,  
Of their chose Saint, mine hid as worthlesse rite,  
Grant me to see where I my offerings give.

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<sup>54</sup> Ovid, p. 62.

Then let me weare the marke of *Cupids* might,  
In heart, as they in skin of *Phæbus* light,  
Not ceasing offerings to Love while I live (5-14).

Unlike the Indians, who ‘sacrifice’ their white skin to the worship of the sun, Pamphilia’s sacrifice to Love has no outward effect; her skin remains ‘pale and white’. The pallor of grief makes no difference to Pamphilia’s appearance. Here Wroth draws on a parallel already present in Ovid: that between the transformation of an individual’s colouring through emotion and the scorching of the Ethiopians. Phaeton is introduced by Ovid in Book I with a colour change that foreshadows the colour change the Ethiopians will undergo:

Erubuit Phaethon iramque pudore repressit  
et tulit ad Clymenen Epaphi convicia matrem; (I.754-755).<sup>55</sup>

At this reproach did Phaeton wax as red as any fire;  
Howbeit for the present time did shame repress his ire.  
Unto his mother Clymen straight he goeth to detect  
The spiteful words that Epaphus against him did object.<sup>56</sup>

As Phaeton is red with anger and shame, so is Pamphilia white with grief. Phaeton reddens because he is not able to defend his reputation and that of his mother. He has no evidence of his true parentage. Even in his fateful

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<sup>55</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> Golding, p. 58.

request to fly Apollo's chariot, Phaeton is seeking to prove to the outside world that he is his father's son. Pamphilia too mourns the lack of outward evidence of her true nature. Wroth's speaker laments that her wounds are 'hid as worthlesse rite'. However, this lack of change is also a boast, underpinning her constancy and fixed whiteness, suggesting her personal restraint. Pamphilia's whiteness and restraint are emphasised by the redness and impulsiveness that they correct in the Phaeton story. While the sonnet celebrates Pamphilia's constancy in her devotion to Love, the speaker also laments a lack of outward change, because she wishes her devotion to be acknowledged. In the volta Pamphilia accepts the secrecy of her wounds. 'Then let me weare the marke of *Cupids* might, / In heart' she concludes, having repressed her vain need for acknowledgement that brought Phaeton to his downfall. Again, Wroth portrays Pamphilia correcting the mistakes of a male figure from Ovid and providing an example of Neo-stoic constancy.<sup>57</sup>

Wroth's final image of a state of constant offering recalls the final transformation of the Phaeton tale, that of the Heliades. After they had wept for four months, Phaeton's sisters begin to turn into poplars and so their mother began to tear at the trees, trying to save them as the bark closed up their bodies. As blood poured from the trees they cried out to their mother to stop wounding them. The blood of the Heliades is the amber that pours out from poplar trees. This flow continues eternally, and Ovid presents these outpourings as offerings to love.

Inde fluunt lacrimae, stillataque sole rigescunt

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<sup>57</sup> For Pamphilia as a correction of Theseus, see section 3.2.

de ramis electra novis, quae lucidus amnis  
excipit et nuribus mittit gestanda Latinis (II.364-366).<sup>58</sup>

Now from these trees flow gummy tears that amber men do call,  
Which, hardened with the heat of sun as from the boughs they fall,  
The trickling river doth receive and sends as things of price  
To deck the dainty dames of Rome and make them fine and nice.<sup>59</sup>

Here again, the link between Wroth's work and Ovid's text is clearly not mediated by Golding's translation, which reduces this eternal devotion to love, to an eternal devotion to frivolous jewellery. The amber which the trees produce in Golding's translation goes to 'deck the dainty dames of Rome', to make them 'fine and nice'. This rendering does not address Ovid's use of 'nuribus'. The wearers of the amber will be young brides, making the sisters' endless offerings specifically to love. 'Gestanda' also implies a certain amount of care more evocative of Wroth's 'offerings' than Golding's prosaic 'sends'. While Golding does not choose to make amber emblematic of young love, the idea is present in the early modern period. Famously, 'amber studs' are on the passionate shepherd's gift list in Marlowe's poem, and Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* sells amber necklaces for 'lads to give their dears'.<sup>60</sup> For the early modern reader this reference to Ovid's Phaeton in the sonnet would also have evoked the story of Semele. The story of Semele has much in common with that of Phaeton. Both are struck down by the power of Jove

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<sup>58</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, p. 84.

<sup>59</sup> Golding, p. 74.

<sup>60</sup> Shakespeare, "The Winter's Tale", 4.4.218-221.

and both meet their over-heated end by aspiring to something divine and forbidden to mortals. Both Jove and Apollo swear by the Styx and regret their oath. The idea of the sacrificial burning of the female lover – Semele’s mortal body burnt up (‘arsit’ III.309) by Jupiter – makes this tale a useful reference as the same image is a repeated motif throughout the sequence, perhaps most strongly wrought in P55, when Pamphilia swears: ‘love I will, till I but ashes prove.’<sup>61</sup> Pamphilia’s devotion to love is consistently represented as an example of constancy through suffering, but also, one that transcends mortal norms. The Heliades who, I have argued, appeared in P22 mourning absence are now transformed into servants of love. Pamphilia, who identifies with these figures in both poems, has also made that journey, and is therefore learning as well as teaching.

Where Pamphilia often accepts her abandonment, in some sonnets she does not seem to be grieving at all, and experiences joy; in more sonnets still the beloved seems completely forgotten, and Pamphilia’s relationship with Love is of greater concern. While there are moments when Wroth interacts with the complaint genre, it is more often a journey away from the role of complainant that Pamphilia’s voice enacts.<sup>62</sup> In Song P21, Pamphilia not only rejects both despair and false hope (hope itself is not entirely banished), replacing them with thought, but also rejects the role of complainant. The song is witty, and metapoetic in its self-conscious reference to the way in which Pamphilia draws close to this stock figure:

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<sup>61</sup> For Jupiter’s oath and Semele’s death, see *Metamorphoses* III.287-309, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, pp. 144-147; Golding, p. 103-104.

<sup>62</sup> For a discussion of oscillation between despair and hope in the sonnets, and Pamphilia’s journey towards an absence of either, see my discussion of Wroth’s Neo-stoicism in Chapter 5.

Thought hath yet some comfort given,  
Which despaire hath from us driven:  
Therefore deerely my thoughts cherish,  
Never let such thinking perish.

'Tis an idle thing to plaine,  
Odder farre to dye for paine;  
Thinke and see how thoughts doe rise,  
Winning where there no hope lies;  
Which alone is lovers treasure,  
For by thoughts we love doe measure. (Lines 9-18)

The clearer, more narrative voice of the songs is more akin to the rhetoric of complaint than the dense and ambiguous voice of the sonnets, but here the voice of Pamphilia also declares that it is 'an idle thing to plaine', referring directly to the characteristic speech of the abandoned woman. The light and comic tone of this song is created by the colloquial language Wroth uses to undercut the melodrama of dying for love. Here, Pamphilia designates the behaviour of the complaining woman as silly and strange. Both 'idle' and 'Odder' are not only underwhelming and mundane adjectives to apply to these usually dramatic themes – thus creating a sense of bathos – they also make a value judgement on the usefulness of complaint. The comparative form ('Odder') invites the reader to see a connection between idleness and oddness. The various definitions available for these two words in the

seventeenth century converge in the idea of uselessness and superfluity.<sup>63</sup> The complaining voice is not useful as the poet ought to be, therefore it is one Wroth has Pamphilia performatively reject. The song turns from introspection (lines 1-12) towards exhortation (lines 13-18, quoted above). Pamphilia instructs her listeners, fellow lovers struggling with despair, with clear, monosyllabic imperatives, 'Thinke and see', before returning to her own experience and resolution in the final sestet. The song works on a clear pedagogic model. Pamphilia begins with an example of her own behaviour, then an instruction to her pupils to imitate her example, then finishes with the example of her resolution. The song sees Pamphilia not only rejecting the role of complainant, but presenting the useful poet, that is the teaching poet, as an alternative and preferred role.

In this chapter I have argued that Wroth makes use of Ovid in order to present Pamphilia as an exemplary figure, and that as part of that process Wroth engages with, but ultimately rejects, the rhetoric of female-voiced complaint, which is a rhetoric strongly associated with Ovid's *Heroides*. In some sonnets, as I have shown, Wroth casts Pamphilia in a role very similar to that of a complainant, but rejects as not useful, then returns to, then ultimately moves away from this figure, instead celebrating exemplary constancy. Why, though, is this process so long? Why does Wroth interact at all with the rhetoric of complaint rather than presenting a straightforwardly exemplary figure? Pamphilia is constant as a lover from when she receives the flaming heart in the first sonnet, to, the reader is led to imagine, well beyond the last sonnet, but along the way she struggles to be the exemplary

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<sup>63</sup> See definition 8a "odd, adj." and 2a "idle, adj.", *OED*.

figure who is unswayed by ‘vaine hope’ and jealousy.<sup>64</sup> Jane Grogan argues that in *The Faerie Queene*, the knights are not perfect but learn over a series of interconnected episodes, repeating the lesson until it is learnt, just as a school boy learning his grammar would.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, Wroth’s engagement with complaint and the struggle and process through which her speaker journeys are important because they show Pamphilia learning.

Chapters 2 and 3 have discussed Wroth’s intertextuality with Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. The next chapter will consider why Wroth chose to engage with *Metamorphoses* and its themes of change. I will argue that Wroth employs the Ovidian model of the constant soul in a changing world to present Pamphilia as a continuation of Astrophil – Sidney’s poetic persona – and herself as her uncle’s literary and political heir.

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<sup>64</sup> Chapter 5 examines this process of achieving constancy in the context of Lipsian Neo-stoicism.

<sup>65</sup> Jane Grogan, *Exemplary Spenser: Visual and Poetic Pedagogy in The Faerie Queene* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), p. 61.



## 4. Change and Renewal in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

### 4.1 Introduction

In *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, Wroth makes reference not only to the narrative of *Metamorphoses* but also to its poetry, demonstrating to Wroth's readers her erudition, and proving (if there was ever any doubt about the education of Mary Sidney's niece) that she was an able Latinist.<sup>1</sup> This, however, might have been achieved by the odd reference to Ovid's Latin. Why does Wroth work so hard to create a particularly Ovidian landscape for her lover, Pamphilia, to exist within? Ovid's changing world (to borrow the title of Raphael Lyne's book) is in fact one that is highly concerned with stability.<sup>2</sup> The continual changes in *Metamorphoses* contrast with those things that remain constant. I will argue that Wroth depicts – in Ovidian style – Pamphilia as a constant soul within a changing world, and moreover that she uses Pamphilia to fashion herself as an inheritor of Philip Sidney's literary soul. She carefully avoids depicting her speaker as the empty vessel through which a male voice speaks. Wroth presents herself as not only a continuation of the Sidney legacy, but also as an authority in her own right.

In the first section, this chapter will establish evidence for a theme of change in the sonnet sequence, which goes beyond the direct references to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* discussed in the previous chapter. Next, I will explore

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<sup>1</sup> For Wroth's 'liberal education, with much encouragement from her family, especially from her father', see Tina Krontiris, *Oppositional Voices: Women as Writers and Translators of Literature in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 121; for a more detailed account, see Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), pp. 65, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Raphael Lyne, *Ovid's Changing Worlds: English Metamorphoses 1567-1632* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

the way in which this theme of mutability draws heavily on Ovid's presentation of the constant soul within the changing body. However, Ovid is not Wroth's only source. I will argue that the circular nature of change in the sonnet sequence reveals the influence of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. While it is highly likely that Wroth was influenced by Spenser's writing, I also consider the possible influence of ideas from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* on Wroth's characterisation of 'change' in her sonnets. These two texts (*The Faerie Queene* and *De Rerum Natura*) complicate any simple formulation of changing bodies and constant souls. Similarly, Wroth's presentation of change and constancy is carefully constructed to avoid an authorising strategy that suggests she is no more than a mouthpiece, or echoing tomb for her Sidney ancestors. I will conclude by arguing that Wroth's textual positioning of herself employs and adapts the doctrine of the monarch's two bodies, to suit her role as female poet.

#### 4.2 Change in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*

In addition to the Ovidian references described in the previous chapter, change is a constant theme in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. The sequence constantly shifts between night and day, and muses on the change between the two in P13, P14, P20, P23, P33, P80, P101, and P102. Wroth frequently describes the changes in nature (P4, P22, P31, P73, P88, P94), considers aging (P27, P99, P103), the shifting of sand (P68), the flowing of water (P51), the weather (P100), and the mutable nature of the moon (P63). Across the sequence Pamphilia's emotions, too, change from hope, to despair, to joy, to acceptance. However, as I shall argue in Chapter 5, this is not a linear or

narrative progression, beginning in one emotional state and journeying towards another; Pamphilia's emotional journey seems instead to be circular, learning the lesson of acceptance again and again throughout the sequence. The constant in the midst of all this change is Pamphilia's love or status as a lover. As Elaine Beilin argues, Wroth has already characterised the speaker of the sonnets in *Urania* as 'a noble queen, a paragon of constancy, faith, and active courage – and also a woman who feels love, jealousy, and occasionally even despair.'<sup>3</sup> Despite these emotional fluctuations, Pamphilia's love remains constant. Later in this chapter I shall explore Wroth's depiction of Pamphilia's inner core or soul as immortal, through the opening and closing sonnets.

Pamphilia's frequent references to night are balanced by sonnets that mention day. In stark contrast to its predecessor, sonnet P23 begins with a joyful description of the sun. The first quatrain establishes the beauty of the sunrise, and the light and warmth that the sun brings makes the 'world [...] happy' and 'glads the earth':

The Sunne which glads the earth at his bright sight,  
When in the morne he showes his golden face,  
And takes the place from tedious drowsie Night.  
Making the world still happy in his grace.

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<sup>3</sup> Elaine V. Beilin argues that in the *Urania* Pamphilia is a figure of constancy surrounded by change. Beilin suggests the sonnet sequence depicts a female world of constancy in contrast to the male world of change in the *Urania*. I argue that the pattern Beilin identifies in the romance is also true of the sonnet sequence: Beilin, "The Onely Perfect Vertue: Constancy in Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Spenser Studies*, 2 (1981), pp. 232, 240, 230.

Shewes happinesse remaines not in one place,  
Nor may the Heavens alone to us give light,  
But hide that cheerefull face, though no long space,  
Yet long enough for tryall of their might.

But never Sun-set could be so obscure,  
No Desart ever had a shade so sad:  
Nor could black darkness ever prove so bad,  
As paines which absence makes me now indure.

The missing of the Sunne awhile makes Night,  
But absence of my joy sees never light.<sup>4</sup>

The global perspective indicated in the first quatrain continues in the second as the speaker acknowledges that the sun shines ‘not in one place’ nor do ‘the Heavens alone to us give light,’ suggestively evoking the other places and foreign climes that the sun visits.<sup>5</sup> Line 5, ‘Shewes happinesse remains not in one place’, confirms the link between the movement of the sun and good fortune that has been suggested by the opening image of the sun’s rays bringing happiness. The sonnet assures us that both the sun and good fortune will return. The sun becomes a benign and kingly or perhaps Godly (‘grace’ would be appropriate for either) version of Fortune with her wheel.

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<sup>4</sup> Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), P23, pp.218-219.

<sup>5</sup> For discourses of imperialism in Wroth’s work, see Bernadette Andrea, “Pamphilia’s Cabinet: Gendered Authorship and Empire in Lady Mary Wroth’s *Urania*”, *ELH*, 68, 2 (2001), pp. 335-358; Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 177-210.

The 'Heavens' provision for all (both in light and gladness) exists in a cyclical pattern, like day and night. The association with God continues in lines seven and eight. The 'cheerefull face' of the sun or good fortune is hidden for a short time, 'Yet long enough for tryall of their might'. This idea of 'tryall' that ends in salvation has associations with the suffering of the elect. Wroth also brings the focus back to Pamphilia's (often night-time) suffering in line eight, but then goes on to create a stark contrast between the cyclical movement of suffering and the sun, and Pamphilia's constant pain. From line nine the focus of the sonnet turns to the speaker's desolate and constant experience. Wroth uses a triadic structure to build the bleak picture of Pamphilia's state: 'never [...] / No [...] / Nor [...].' Wroth sustains the conceit of light as joy, and the sun's absence as trial. In the final couplet Wroth insists that Pamphilia's suffering exists outside the normal rules of change and renewal, 'The missing of the Sunne a while makes Night, / But absence of my joy sees never light.' While this sort of inversion is not a rare poetic technique, Wroth's frequent use of such figures in relation to mutability creates the emphatic idea of Pamphilia as an unmoving entity in a changing world.

The idea of constant movement between night and day is emphasised by the sonnet's position in the sequence. The sonnet follows P22, a mournful poem full of night and dying leaves, and is followed in turn by another night-time sonnet, P24, in which Pamphilia sees the image of the beloved in her sleep. P25, one of Wroth's more famous sonnets, returns to brilliant sunshine, and explores the other places that the sun illuminates.<sup>6</sup> Wroth uses the order of her sonnets to evoke the process of ceaseless and circular change

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<sup>6</sup> P25, 'Like to the Indians scorched with the Sunne,' is discussed in Chapter 3.

that is described in P23. A sense of shifting between night and day exists throughout the sequence, but there are sometimes longer forays into night, and the theme is often more indefinite and ambiguous than it appears in this run of sonnets. Throughout these shifts (both the clear and the indistinct) Pamphilia's status as a lover remains constant.

#### 4.3 Ovid's Changing Forms and Stable Souls

Wroth's depiction of the constant lover surrounded by a world of change is strongly influenced by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Ovid's epic of change is repeatedly concerned with the stability of an inner soul or spirit. In Ovid's stories of transformation the mind, emotions, and the essential identity of the physically metamorphosed usually remains constant although the body changes. This identity can remain for posterity long after the lover or victim (as is often the case in Ovid) has faded away. The tale of Io, repeatedly invoked in Wroth's sequence, is one in which this idea is clearly articulated: although the body changes the mind remains the same.<sup>7</sup>

Illa etiam supplex Argo cum bracchia vellet  
tendere, non habuit, quae bracchia tenderet Argo,  
conataque queri mugitus edidit ore  
pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita voce est (I.635-638).<sup>8</sup>

and when she did devise

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<sup>7</sup> P38, P65, P97.

<sup>8</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1916), p. 46.

To Argus for to lift her hands in meek and humble wise,  
She saw she had no hands at all; and when she did assay  
To make complaint, she lowèd out, which did her so affray,  
That oft she started at the noise and would have run away.<sup>9</sup>

With each example Ovid builds a contrast between what Io wishes to do, that is, what she would do if she were still a woman, and the actions her current form allows. Ovid's word order recreates the cruel drama of realisation, as if Io has forgotten in her moment of supplication that she has neither arms nor human voice. A similar effect is used in Book III, in the story of Actaeon. In this terrifying episode, the hunter, Actaeon, comes across Diana bathing, and is transformed into a stag. He is then attacked by his own hunting hounds, whose speed and ferocity has been catalogued earlier in the tale. When the transformed Actaeon tries, and fails, to call out. Ovid finishes the transformation with the chilling finality of the clause 'mens tantum pristina mansit' (III.203), 'No part remainèd (save his mind) of that he erst had been'.<sup>10</sup> While he is torn apart by dogs, the speechless Actaeon is aware of who he is, and that they are his own, loyal animals. The poignancy and horror of the tale lies in the fact that his mind remains in its former state.<sup>11</sup> In the story of Philomel, to which Wroth refers in P93, the transformed women retain their agenda even after they become birds. Philomel is raped and mutilated by her sister's husband, Tereus. Although her tongue has been cut out to silence her, Philomela manages to communicate this to her sister,

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<sup>9</sup> Arthur Golding, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. Arthur Golding (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Volume I, p. 138; Golding, p. 100.

<sup>11</sup> For early modern readings of Actaeon and Io, see section 1.3.

Procne, through a woven cloth. Procne, in revenge, murders her son, Itys, and feeds him to her husband. When Procne and her sister reveal what they have done, Tereus begins to pursue them, sword drawn, and at that moment all three are transformed into birds. Philomela, the nightingale seeks out the forest, and Procne, the swallow, hides in the eaves of the house, her plumage forever retaining the marks of blood from her murder of Itys. Tereus, likewise, retains hints of his tyrannical and violent nature in his own plumage (VI.667-674).<sup>12</sup>

In the song P93 – which features Philomela - Wroth recreates exactly this dynamic of the soul retaining its identity in a changed form, in a changed landscape. The song begins with a celebration of spring in lines 1-14. The invocation to Spring connects the seasonal change with a move from sadness to happiness, ‘Come merry Spring delight us, / For Winter long did spight us’. The imagery is of plenty, with happiness and good things ‘increasing’, ‘growing’ and ‘freely flowing’. In the centre of this fecund and festive scene Wroth depicts Philomela contributing to the beauty of the scene but still mourning.

*Philomel* in this Arbour  
Makes now her loving Harbour,  
Yet of her state complaining,  
Her Notes in mildnesse strayning,  
Which though sweet,  
Yet doe meet

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<sup>12</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Volume I, p. 334; Golding, p. 199.



Her former luckelesse paining. (lines 15-21)<sup>13</sup>

Despite the merriment, ‘mirth’, and ‘delight’ of Spring, the nightingale continues to mourn, as if her metamorphosis has made her mind even more fixed, as her mourning has outlived the lifespan of a mortal woman or a single bird. The sad figure resistant to the emotional turn of spring also appears in P7, but P93 adds an Ovidian note to this trope. Wroth’s use of the image of Philomela seems at once conventional and refreshing, as she recalls the figure from a generic image of female (or more commonly, poetic) suffering, and then reconnects her pain with its cause.<sup>14</sup> Initially the Philomela in this poem seems to be depicted in terms of contemporaneous popular culture: as a suffering woman, rather than Ovid’s victim of sexual violence and mutilation. ‘Makes now her loving harbour’ characterises Philomela as, like Pamphilia, nurturing some unrequited love, which bears no relation to Ovid’s story. However, it is as if the strength of Philomela’s story cannot be contained in this hackneyed poetic trope, as over the next few lines Wroth creates a tension between the story of Philomel – well-known to the early modern reader – and the decorative and superficial role she seems to play in the poem. The oxymoron in line 18, ‘Her Notes in mildnesse straying’, suggests that Philomela is experiencing an emotion that the gentle music she performs cannot express. The ‘sweet[ness]’ of her song cannot disguise its appropriateness to her former suffering (‘paining’, line 21). On

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<sup>13</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P93, pp. 260-261.

<sup>14</sup> For the early modern reception of Philomela as emblematic of female suffering and poetic creativity and the struggle for expression (including a discussion of Philip Sidney’s “The Nightingale”), see Lee A. Ritscher, *The Semiotics of Rape in Renaissance English Literature* (Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 32-46.

another level, since this is a song, and was probably set to music, the singing Philomel functions as an expression of the singing Pamphilia's grief and pain.<sup>15</sup> Yet Philomel is not tucked away in the centre of the song but dominates its last stanza. The reader or listener is left with Philomel's 'paining'. In the same way that, in Ovid's story, Philomel's characteristics remain the same when she has been transformed into a bird, her pain seems to be able to withstand being transformed into a poetic trope. The 'mild' notes that she strains against are reminiscent of the early modern practice of setting words to different music, and thereby transforming or adding to the meaning of the words and or the music.<sup>16</sup> Philomel's essential character survives all these different types of transformation.

This stability of identity or inner core, and the strength of that constant attribute, stands out in contrast to the surrounding fluidity of form and location in the poem. It is this idea of constancy in the midst of change that Wroth uses the setting of *Metamorphoses* to evoke. Wroth's contemporaries would have easily understood her reading of *Metamorphoses* as a treatise on constancy rather than on change, as the teachings of Pythagoras in Book XV were thought by many to be the 'ideological centre' of the work.<sup>17</sup> At the heart of his teaching, Ovid's Pythagoras states that, whilst physical forms change, the soul remains:

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<sup>15</sup> For the relationship between Wroth's poems and music, see Katherine R. Larson, "Voicing the Lyric: The Songs of Mary Wroth", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson, Naomi J. Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 123-124.

<sup>16</sup> For the interactive relationship between words and musical settings, see David Lindley, "Music and Poetry", *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture, Volume 2*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 264-277.

<sup>17</sup> Lyne, pp. 52-23; Colin Burrow, "Re-embodying Ovid: Renaissance afterlives", *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. by Philip Hardie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 301. This is not, however, how Book XV is always received. Philip Hardie argues that the book ought not to be seen as an organising principle for the epic: Hardie, *Lucretian Receptions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 137.

Omnia mutantur, nihil interit: errat et illinc  
huc venit, hinc illuc, et quoslibet occupat artus  
spiritus eque feris humana in corpora transit  
inque feras noster, nec tempore deperit ullo,  
utque novis facilis signatur cera figuris  
nec manet ut fuerat nec formam servat eandem,  
sed tamen ipsa eadem est, animam sic semper eandem  
esse, sed in varias doceo migrare figuras (XV.165-172).<sup>18</sup>

All things do change. But nothing, sure, doth perish. This same sprite  
Doth fleet and, fisking here and there, doth swiftly take his flight  
From one place to another place and entereth every wight,  
Removing out of man to beast and out of beast to man.  
But yet it never perisheth nor never perish can.  
And even as supple wax with ease receiveth figures strange,  
And keeps not aye one shape ne bides assurèd aye from change  
And yet continueth always wax in substance, so, I say  
The soul is aye the selfsame thing it was, and yet astray  
It fleeteth into sundry shapes.<sup>19</sup>

The 'spiritus' or 'anima' remains unchanged whilst the physical world  
fluctuates. Wroth's sonnet sequence mirrors Ovid's epic by placing a constant

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<sup>18</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume II: Books 9-15*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Press, 1916), p. 376.

<sup>19</sup> Golding, p. 440.

figure in the centre of a changing world. Ovid's image of the immortal soul distinct from the physical changes of the world was one factor that made his ambiguous text appealing to early modern readers, as it could be fitted into a Christian narrative.<sup>20</sup>

One of the most striking moments in Gavin Alexander's treatment of Wroth is his explanation of the suitability of the final, Sidneian, half line of Wroth's romance, which leaves the manuscript unfinished. For Alexander, the plot can never end because Pamphilia's constancy can never find a suitable response in Amphilanthus' inconstancy. Alexander conjures up the idea of the *Urania* as a spinning world, at which Pamphilia is the centre:

This is one reason why the work does not end. Amphilanthus' centrifugal restlessness cannot be reconciled to Pamphilia's centripetal constancy; the plot conspires to prevent any lasting union and break up any temporary accord.<sup>21</sup>

Although in this pleasing circular picture Alexander is describing the *Urania*, the same spherical image can be mapped onto the sonnet sequence, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Like the romance, the sonnet sequence does not end. The opening of the sonnet sequence sees Venus implanting a flaming heart in Pamphilia's breast. In the final poem Pamphilia 'leave[s] off' her role as a poet, which she bequeaths to 'young beginners' who are

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<sup>20</sup> Ovid's version of the soul did not fit unproblematically into a Christian narrative, however, because he does not differentiate between the souls of humans and animals: Sue Wiseman, "Popular Culture: A Category for Analysis?", *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England*, ed. by Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> Gavin Alexander, *Writing After Sidney: The Literary Responses to Sir Philip Sidney 1586-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 303.

heated by love (P103, lines 13 and 10).<sup>22</sup> The flaming heart has not been extinguished, but passed to new custodians, a new generation. The final poem suggests the start of a new cycle. The flaming heart is like the ‘anima’ from Ovid’s Book XV. The part of the speaker that is the poet remains constant, living on in another body, just as the Sidneian spirit (or indeed poetic body) has been living in Wroth. The constant figure of Pamphilia is present throughout the sequence, which, as I have argued, is circular. Therefore, Pamphilia becomes a still point at the centre of a circle. In this way the shape of the whole sequence doubles the formally ambitious crown of sonnets at the heart of the sequence. Wroth’s *corona* is complete, meaning the final line of the final sonnet begins the crown again, making a complete circle, therefore its narrative is infinite: Pamphilia’s navigation of the maze must be repeated again and again (just as in the romance she is repeatedly challenged by Amphilanthus’ infidelity). In every iteration of the maze, Pamphilia treads the same path, her constancy remains unperturbed. The labyrinth is analogous to life. As the world rotates the constant lover keeps the same course, still, at its centre. That Pamphilia is chosen at the start of the sequence and relinquishes the role at the end, does not negate this perpetual constancy. While the body might change, the soul of constancy remains the same.

The idea of the constant soul is also found in Wroth’s construction of Pamphilia as a speaker with an internal emotional authenticity in P41 and P45, independent from outside shows.<sup>23</sup> The assertion of authentic interiority is a common trope in poetry of this period; however, there are moments

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<sup>22</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P103, p. 266.

<sup>23</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P41, p. 229, P45, p. 232.

when Wroth's claims for Pamphilia's interiority have a more peculiarly physical dimension that imagines the sequence's speaker as a vessel, 'Tombe' (P67), or 'store' (P54) for the loving soul.<sup>24</sup> In P24 and P98 the heart is a home for an image, in P25 Pamphilia's insides conceal hidden marks, in P46 her 'soule' is a safe refuge for 'true love', and in P62 the speaker instructs true lovers to turn their eyes inward, 'into your heart'.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the most striking of these moments comes at the start of the sequence in P1 when the flaming heart is implanted into Pamphilia, but another contender comes in P100 when Wroth depicts Pamphilia as a house.

O That no day would ever more appeare,  
     But cloudy night to governe this sad place,  
     Nor light from Heaven these haples roomes to grace  
     Since that light's shadow'd which my Love holds deare.

Let thickest mists in envy master here,  
     And Sunne-borne day for malice show no face,  
     Disdaining light, where *Cupid*, and the race  
     Of Lovers are despisd, and shame shines cleere.

Let me be darke, since barr'd of my chiefe light,  
     And wounding Jealousie commands by might,

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<sup>24</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P67, p. 245, P54, p. 237.

<sup>25</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P24, p. 219, P98, pp. 263-264, P25, pp. 219-220, P46, p.232, P62, pp. 242-243.

But Stage-play-like disguised pleasures give:

To me it seemes, as ancient fictions make

The Starrs, all fashions, and all shapes partake,

While in my thoughts true forme of Love shall live.<sup>26</sup>

The sonnet begins with the earlier concerns of the sequence, as in P17, P22, and P43, as Pamphilia imagines night as the appropriate setting for her grief: 'Let me be darke, since barr'd of my chiefe light'. 'Jealousie', an enemy of constancy throughout the sequence, is here depicted as powerful (as she or he 'commands by might'), but is dismissed as artificial. It is not until line 11 that the nightmarish, changeable 'mists' and 'clouds' of 'envy' are dismissed as 'Stage-play-like', and suddenly dispersed from the sonnet. In the following lines, Pamphilia explains her perception of the 'Starrs' as changeable, as they are portrayed in 'ancient fictions': that they 'all fashions, and all shapes partake'. When Pamphilia realises the falsehoods of Jealousy, she begins to see everything as unreal. The ancient fictions referred to must include Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which depicts aetiological stories of the stars, in which they 'all shapes partake'.<sup>27</sup> Wroth may also have a particular passage in mind here, from the story of Phaeton, which she has already alluded to in the sequence: when Phaeton drives his father's chariot and loses control of the horses, he

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<sup>26</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P100, pp. 264-265.

<sup>27</sup> A few examples of aetiological star narratives in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* include how Ariadne's diadem is transformed into a constellation by Bacchus (VIII.176-182), while Arcas and Callisto are changed by Jupiter into the Big Bear and Little Bear constellations to avoid matricide (II.505-507): see Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I*, pp. 418, 94.

causes havoc in the sky and the stars shift from their usual place.<sup>28</sup> In this episode the stars regain their living characteristics and flee the heat of the wild chariot. Once again, the changing, Ovidian world is contrasted to Pamphilia's constant interior, where the 'true forme of Love shall live.' However, in relation to the rest of the sequence and the sonnet tradition more widely, the moving stars have a further significance. Close to the opening of the sequence in P2, and later in P47 Wroth compares the beloved's eyes to stars.<sup>29</sup> This is a conventional Petrarchan move and reminiscent of Sidney's Stella. Here, however, the star, symbolic of the beloved, becomes a shape-shifter and an uncertainty with the inclusion of this Ovidian reference. Alongside the general instability of the natural world, the shapeshifting stars indicate that the beloved is changeable, or that the beloved is reported to be changeable. Pamphilia refers to 'fictions', suggesting not only a literary reference, but also gossip. The movements of these stars could be false reports, like the other allusions and misdirection provided by Jealousy throughout the sequence. Wroth allows for both meanings, or either, through her typically ambiguous syntax. Ultimately this uncertainty is irrelevant, as the refuge for true love within Pamphilia is a safe and reliable house. At first it appears that Pamphilia is asking for the place where she is – 'this sad place' – to be 'gouverne[d]' by 'cloudy night', and that she is in a house or set of 'rooms' (line 3). Location is again suggested by 'here' in line five, 'Let thickest mists and envy master here'. Then, in line nine, Wroth shifts from place to person in 'Let me be darke'. This seems like a progression

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<sup>28</sup> For P25, in which Wroth alludes to the story of Phaeton, see Chapter 3 of this thesis. For the movement of constellations in II.171-177 and II.193-200 (including a translation), see Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Volume I, pp. 72-73, 72-75.

<sup>29</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P2, pp. 205-206, P47, pp. 232-233.



or escalation from Pamphilia's wish for her surroundings to be dark, to a wish for herself. However, in the final line, when Pamphilia contrasts her constancy to the changeable, semi-fictitious world around her, she says, 'in my thoughts true forme of Love shall live.' The choice of 'live' retrospectively reveals the poem's conceit, that Pamphilia is the house. Outside, the house is beset by darkness, mists, and clouds, and is surrounded by the changing night sky, but inside is a safe home for Love.

#### 4.4 Change in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*

In her use of *Metamorphoses* Wroth follows Spenser, who draws upon Ovid's epic in *The Faerie Queene*. While Ovidian references can be identified throughout *The Faerie Queene*, the Mutabilitie Cantos and the Garden of Adonis represent two episodes in which Spenser's interaction with Ovid and his theme of change is strongly felt.<sup>30</sup> Spenser, however, presents change in a different manner from Ovid's, emphasising not only the ubiquity of change but also its circular nature, which is portrayed in Mutabilitie's pageant in the Mutabilitie Cantos.<sup>31</sup> In her sonnet sequence, Wroth's conception of change bears much similarity to Spenser's on cyclical renewal.<sup>32</sup> Given the Elizabethan nostalgia inherent in the form of Wroth's works, it is highly likely

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<sup>30</sup> Books I-III of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, reprinted in 1596 along with books IV-VI. Spenser died in 1599. *The Faerie Queene* was printed in folio in 1609 and only then were the *Two Cantos of Mutabilitie* included in the work. For a timeline of Spenser's life and work, see *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A. C. Hamilton (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), pp. xiv-xix.

<sup>31</sup> Colin Burrow argues that Spenser counters a sense of sterility in Ovid's changes with a more fecund version in *The Faerie Queene*, "Original Fictions: Metamorphoses in *The Faerie Queene*", *Ovid Renewed*, ed. by Charles Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 99-119.

<sup>32</sup> I discuss the circular form of the sequence and the motif of night and day towards the beginning of this chapter. For the reassuring nature of cyclical change in Spenser, see Leonard Barkan, *The Gods Made Flesh: Metamorphosis and the Pursuit of Paganism* (London: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 240.

that Wroth was influenced by Spenser in her reading of Ovid.<sup>33</sup> In this section I will argue that Wroth is influenced by Spenser's depiction of a sense of constancy or immortality in mutability in both the Mutabilitie Cantos and the Garden of Adonis episode in *The Faerie Queene*. I argue that Spenser's representation of Philip Sidney, metamorphosed into a flower, influenced Wroth's presentation of Pamphilia as a continuation of an immortal Sidney tradition. In this chapter so far, I have discussed the ways in which Wroth presents Pamphilia as separated from the world of change, but there are also moments in the sequence when Wroth uses the images of circular change to suggest the immortality of the loving spirit. I will begin by expanding on the influence of the Mutabilitie Cantos on the sequence, and then address Wroth's interaction with Spenser's Garden of Adonis.

In the Mutabilitie Cantos (Book VII), the figure of Mutabilitie, a titaness, appears to claim the world as her own, and intends to depose Jupiter and the Olympian gods.<sup>34</sup> She argues that all things are changeable, even the gods themselves, so they should all rightfully be under her rule. In Book VII, Canto vii, all the gods and 'all other creatures' (vii.3) come to Arlo Hill for the matter between Mutabilitie and Jove to be judged by Nature. Mutabilitie puts forward her case with the claim that all things change, including man and animals, all the elements, and even the gods (represented

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<sup>33</sup> Robert Lanier Reid argues for a much stronger connection. He argues that Spenser's text is conspicuous for the absence of a human embodiment of Constancy. He argues that Wroth's Pamphilia is the missing figure that completes Spenser's unfinished work: see Robert Lanier Reid, "Spenser's Mutability Song: Conclusion or Transition?", *Celebrating Mutabilitie: Essays on Edmund Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos*, ed. by Jane Grogan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 61-84.

<sup>34</sup> Spenser, pp. 691-712. For the influence of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* on the speech of Mutabilitie, and Spenser's Christianising of change, see Barkan, p. 241. For Ovidian influences on Spenser's presentation of the nature of power in the Mutabilitie Cantos, see Supriya Choudhuri, "Mutability, Metamorphosis, and the Nature of Power", *Celebrating Mutabilitie: Essays on Edmund Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos*, ed. by Jane Grogan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 178-200.

in the movement of stars). In the middle of her speech she summons a pageant to demonstrate the constant movement of the months and seasons (stanzas 28 – 43), of day and night (stanza 44), and of the hours (stanza 45); Mutabilitie ends her pageant by presenting life and death (stanza 46). Mutabilitie's pageant highlights a circular nature of change. This seasonal conception of change is evident in Wroth's emphasis on seasonal change. P73, for example, provides a view of change as constant renewal.

The Springing time of my first loving,  
Finds yet no Winter of removing;  
Nor frosts to make my hopes decrease:  
But with the summer still increase.

The trees may teach us Love's remaining,  
Who suffer change with little paining:  
Though Winter make their leaves decrease,  
Yet with the Summer they increase.

As birds by silence shew their mourning  
in cold, yet sing at Springs returning:  
So may Love nipt a while decrease,  
but as the Summer soone increase. (P73, lines 1-12)<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P73, pp. 248-249.

The song begins with an assertion of Pamphilia's lack of change in the first couplet. There are no seasons to her love, which remains in its Springtime, undepleted by any Winter. The second couplet alters this claim: her hopes do not 'decrease', rather they 'increase'. The strange economy of Pamphilia's love that we have already seen in the ever increasing, powerful 'store of sighs' of P54 again comes into play here, as she is presented as having an infinite capacity for paradoxical increase.<sup>36</sup> Taking on a didactic tone, Pamphilia turns to the lessons that trees can teach about love, particularly its 'remaining'. The tree remains unmoved as its leaves 'decrease' and 'increase' with Winter and Summer. Like the tree, love may 'suffer' change, but will remain constant. A couplet on seasonal 'decrease' and 'increase' provides a regular refrain throughout the song, occurring six times in the 24-line song. The regularity of its return at the last two lines of every quatrain illustrates a circular, seasonal pattern. The final quatrain echoes almost precisely the first (lines 21-24) making the song a round, again emphasising the cyclical nature of seasonal change. The song invites its reader or listener to imagine love like a tree, its foliage increasing and decreasing, but its central core remaining the same. The change surrounding the tree is constant, endless, and as inevitable as the fact that the tree remains. In Wroth's poem, we see change represented as a constant and circular process of renewal. It is this same constancy of change that Spenser's *Mutabilitie* emphasises with her pageant.

Nature rules against *Mutabilitie*, her rebellion is quelled, and Jove is 'confirm'd in his imperiall see' (vii.59.7). Yet Spenser does not depict a straightforward victory of constancy and authority over rebellion, change,

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<sup>36</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P54, p. 237.

and aspiration.<sup>37</sup> Nature's ruling does not promise Jove any security of power, as she foresees that his time too will end. Her ruling is tempered with the prophetic lines: 'But time shall come that all shall changed bee, / And from thenceforth, none no more change shall see' (vii.59.4-5). Nature's prophecy evokes a Christian apocalypse, which is also depicted as the end point of change in Wroth's sonnet sequence.<sup>38</sup> While the closing sonnet of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* envisages 'young beginners' (line 10) continuing Pamphilia's 'discourse' (line 9), other sonnets, such as P80 and P101, predict an apocalyptic end to this song of constancy.<sup>39</sup> P101, discussed in chapter 6, describes love's improving powers and finishes: 'Thinke on [Love's] glory, which shall still ascend, / Untill the world come to a finall end, / And then shall we thy lasting powre discerne.' The subject of the verb that begins line 12 is unclear. Is the verb an imperative, instructing the reader to 'Thinke', or is the 'I' from 'I think upon thy paine' in line 9 the implied subject? The ambiguous nature of the verb here makes it unclear who will continue this task of meditating upon Love until the apocalypse: it is not clearly Pamphilia, nor is she clearly ruled out of inclusion. P80, which is part of Wroth's *corona*, has a similarly exhortative tone in which it is unclear whether Pamphilia is addressing herself or the listener. The labyrinth which begins and ends the *corona* dramatises Pamphilia's first person journey: 'In this strange Labyrinth how shall *I* turn' (P77 and P90, emphasis mine).<sup>40</sup> Much of the

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<sup>37</sup> For the subversive and anxious nature of Spenser's text, see Ayesha Ramachandran, "Mutabilitie's Lucretian Metaphysics: Scepticism and Cosmic Process in Spenser's Cantos", *Celebrating Mutabilitie: Essays on Edmund Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos*, ed. by Jane Grogan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 230.

<sup>38</sup> Barkan, p. 231. Gordon Teskey, "Night Thoughts on Mutability", *Celebrating Mutabilitie: Essays on Edmund Spenser's Mutabilitie Cantos*, ed. by Jane Grogan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 31, 40-52.

<sup>39</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P80, pp. 252-253, P101, p. 265.

<sup>40</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P77, p. 251, P90, p. 258.

*corona* reads like Pamphilia's explanation of what it means to 'leave all and take the threed of Love' (P77 and P78), which turns P80 into – at least in part – Pamphilia's instructions to herself as well as to others.

And be in his brave Court a glorious light  
Shine in the eyes of Faith, and Constancy  
Maintaine the fires of Love, still burning bright,  
Not slightly sparkling, but light flaming be.

Never to slake till earth no Starres can see,  
Till Sun, and Moone doe leave to us darke night,  
And second Chaos once againe doe free  
Us, and the World from all divisions spight. (P80, lines 1-8)<sup>41</sup>

Pamphilia's task and instruction is not only to 'Maintaine the fires of Love' like a Vestal or priestess, but also to 'be [...] a glorious light'. The offering for burning is Pamphilia herself, yet the fire is supposed to be maintained 'Till Sun, and Moone doe leave to us darke night, / And second Chaos once againe doe free / Us'. Paul Salzman's modernised spelling in the La Trobe online edition has line 8 as 'Never to slack'. Either verb communicates the unceasing nature of devotion but *slake* (pronounced to rhyme with 'cake') continues Wroth's narrative of endless increase. Pamphilia has moved beyond the ashes of P55 to infinite burning that is never satisfied. This phoenix-like imagery suggests that Pamphilia alone cannot satisfy this

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<sup>41</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P80, pp. 252-253.

endless demand, but later figures containing the Sidneian soul must continue feeding the flames until the 'second Chaos'. The inclusion of the change-ending apocalypse in Wroth's work seems to be strongly influenced by the end of Spenser's *Mutabilitie Cantos*.

However, in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, change is not only depicted as something to be endured until the apocalypse, it is also depicted as a necessity for life. In P73, as we have seen, the tree and its changing leaves is offered as an example of Stoic resignation to inevitable change. However, it is the seasonal changes of the leaves – the renewal – that keeps the tree alive. The tree not only 'suffer[s] change with little paining', that change is also necessary to the tree.<sup>42</sup> Confusingly, rather than being depicted in total contrast to the constant soul, the change in the material world is also depicted as creating immortality. In P88, which forms part of the *corona* praising Love and instructing the way to follow the thread of true love, Pamphilia encourages herself and her listener to be like the blossoms on a tree, falling, but not truly dying.

Be giv'n to him, who triumphs in his right;  
Nor fading be, but like those blossomes faire,  
Which fall for good, and lose their colours bright  
Yet dye not, but with fruit their losse repaire (P88, lines 1-4).<sup>43</sup>

Though the flowers have fallen 'for good', they 'dye not'. This paradox is solved in the fruit that will succeed the fallen flowers. Though not as

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<sup>42</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P73, pp. 248-249.

<sup>43</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P88, p. 257.

emphatic in its depiction of seasonal renewal as P73, the idea of perpetuity through succession is strongly established in the vivid image of the blossoms and 'their colours bright'. Wroth's image of perpetuity through seasonal renewal shows the influence of Spenser's Garden of Adonis on the poet.<sup>44</sup> Adonis' eternal yet mortal existence in the garden is like that of the other flowers in the garden, appearing a few stanzas earlier. 'Fresh *Hyacinthus*' and 'Foolish *Narcisse*' in stanza 45 are described as 'sad lovers [...] transformde of yore' and come from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>45</sup> This reference prepares the reader for the appearance of Adonis, and pre-emptively reminds his reader that in *Metamorphoses*, Adonis is also transformed into a flower upon his own bloody death (*Metamorphoses*, X.725-739).<sup>46</sup> Then Spenser likens Adonis' existence to the annual life of a flower, seasonally wilting and renewing:

And sooth it seemes they say: for he may not  
 For ever dye, and ever buried bee  
 In balefull night, where all thinges are forgot;  
 All be he subject to mortalitie,  
 Yet is eterne in mutabilitie,  
 And by succession made perpetuall,

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<sup>44</sup> This episode of *The Faerie Queene* also provides a model for some of the confusing ways in which Wroth creates a sense of uncertainty and change, but also of cyclical change in her sonnet sequence. In the Garden of Adonis (III.vi) Cupid exists as both boy and man. In stanza vi.11 Cupid is Venus' 'little sonne', in vi.49 he is the 'winged boy' – perhaps a more ambivalent term – and in the very next stanza, vi.50, he has fathered a child by 'his trew loue faire Psyche'. The child is called Pleasure, and Psyche appears to be a responsible adult who raises both Pleasure and Amoretta (vi.51). Similarly, in Wroth's sequence Cupid changes from baby to stately king and back in a non-narrative manner. These changes add to the theme of cyclical renewal. In Wroth's sonnet sequence the figure of Love changes from child, to powerful king, to baby, to a version of the Christian God.

<sup>45</sup> Spenser, III.vi.45.2-5.

<sup>46</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Volume II, pp. 116-117.



Transformed oft, and chaunged diverslie (III.vi.47).

As flowers grow to maturity, wilt, and die and are then replaced by their successors – that is, by fruit and by more flowers the following year – so Adonis is ‘by succession made perpetuall’. He ‘may not / For ever dye, and ever buried bee’ because he buds from the ground every time he dies. Spenser’s ‘buried bee’ runs over to the next line, continuing ‘In balefull night, where all thinges are forgot’ shifting into more figurative language. The following two lines, that alliteratively contrast ‘mortalitie’ with ‘mutabilitie’ in emphatic positions at the ends of both lines, add to the feeling that this stanza is a riddle. What is ‘subiect to mortalitie, / Yet is eterne in mutabilitie’? A flower. Indeed, in stanza 46 it not clear whether Adonis is a flower or not. He ‘in secret [...] does ly, / Lapped in flowres and pretious spycery’ as if he were another specimen in the flower bed.<sup>47</sup> Even the language used to describe Venus’ sexual enjoyment of Adonis might be understood in horticultural terms.

There wont fayre *Venus* often to enjoy

Her deare *Adonis* joyous company,

And reape sweet pleasure of the wanton boy (vi.46.1-3)

Though harvesting is a common image for sexual intercourse, there is also a sense that Venus might literally be harvesting the flowers. The adjective ‘wanton’ is used to describe the ivy and eglantine in stanza 44 lines 4-6. The

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<sup>47</sup> Spenser, II.vi.46.4-5.

trees and climbing plants might be described thus to heighten the fecund and sexually charged atmosphere of the garden, but the repetition also serves to reduce any suggestion of Adonis having human form. He may be consumable only in the same way as the ‘pretious spycery’ that lies next to him. Spenser plays with the ambiguity between literal and figurative transformation. At this moment Adonis might be treated as a flower by Venus, in that he is made decorative, to be enjoyed, and feminised by his position in the garden, yet simultaneously, Spenser allows the interpretation that he literally is a flower. The final line of the stanza enacts a similar tension between the literal and figurative, as Venus ‘Possesseth him, and of his sweetnesse takes her fill’ (vi.46.9). Venus might be picking a flower, and inhaling, ‘tak[ing] her fill’, of its ‘sweetnesse’, or she might be taking an active role in coitus. The particularly plant-like description of Adonis’ life as ‘eterne in mutabilitie’ follows, and it is not until stanza 48 when Adonis is described as ‘Joying his goddesse, and of her enjoyd’ that Spenser indicates that Adonis is in human form and capable of enjoying Venus in his turn.<sup>48</sup> Even then, the rules of the metamorphic landscape that Spenser inherits from Ovid mean that Adonis’ human form is by no means a certainty.

The ambiguity of Adonis’ status within the garden is important because it creates a closer link between him and the other flowers. Spenser’s evocatively floral description of endless renewal in stanza 47 can be applied to all of the flowers in stanza 45. The most important of these for Wroth, and – as the fact that it is the culmination of a tricolon crescendo indicates – for Spenser, is ‘Sad *Amaranthus*’. Here Spenser represents Sir Philip Sidney.

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<sup>48</sup> Spenser, II.vi.48.1-2.

Sidney's fate reimagined as an Ovidian transformation seems to have been an invention of Abraham Fraunce and Spenser, as Amintas (Sidney) is also transformed into an amaranthus in *The Third Part of The Countess of Pembroke's Yvychurch*.<sup>49</sup> As the amaranthus flower Philip Sidney joins a group of 'sad lovers' in the garden: Hyacinthus, Narcissus, and Adonis.<sup>50</sup>

Sad *Amaranthus*, made a flowre but late,  
 Sad *Amaranthus*, in whose purple gore  
 Me seemes I see *Amintas* wretched fate,  
 To whom sweet Poets verse hath given endlesse date (III.vi.45).

The amaranthus flower appears in classical literature as a symbol of eternity, often linked to Artemis. Though Venus presides over the garden, Artemis - associated with both constant virginity and the changeable moon - is also an appropriate reference for the flowers in the garden that, like Adonis, are 'eterne in mutabilitie'. Emulating an Ovidian transformation, Spenser imagines that 'Sad *Amaranthus*' is Amintas (Sidney) transformed.<sup>51</sup> The

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<sup>49</sup> Edward M. Test, "Seeds of Sacrifice: Amaranth, the Gardens of Tenochtitlan and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*", *Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. by Jyotsna G. Singh (Wiley ebook, 2007), p. 256.

<sup>50</sup> A.C. Hamilton, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2007), p. 349n.

<sup>51</sup> Lyne, p. 110. Test identifies Spenser's knowledge of the literary life of the amaranthus flower but argues that the most important reference is to the newly discovered Mesoamerican amaranth of the New World. The flower was linked to Mexica rituals of human sacrifice in which the heart was removed from the chest. Test argues that this New World context was known to English Renaissance readers and that this idea of a bloody sacrifice is understood in the flower's association with Sidney. Test suggests this image of the heart sacrifice fused with Petrarchan imagery of an exchange of hearts to create an image irresistible to poets and suggests Amoret's heart in *The Faerie Queene* 3.12.21.1-4, sonnet 22 from Spenser's *Amoretti* and Wroth's own P25 ('Like to the Indians') as examples of love poetry that demonstrate a knowledge of 'the Mexica heart-rending ritual'. Amaranthus is 'made a flowre but late' both in that it is lately discovered, reflecting the mutability of the world which the reader inhabits, as well as that of the Garden of Adonis, and because Sidney's death (and transformation) are recent. If Test is correct, then the Mexica reference

description of the ‘purple gore’ of the flower turns the image from the coldly classical to vividly somatic. The unpleasant physical conditions of Sidney’s death break into the flowering scene.

Despite the possible connotations of sacrifice with which authors like Fulke Greville and Mary Sidney depicted Sidney’s death, there is an ambivalence to Spenser’s treatment of Sidney here.<sup>52</sup> The transformation is introduced to the Ovidian catalogue tentatively: ‘Me seemes I see *Amintas* wretched fate’ introduces both the narrative voice in apostrophe and sense of doubt. Is Sidney’s death the stuff of mythology or is this a poetic imagining or distortion of reality? The deaths of Hyacinthus and Narcissus are examples of waste, and ‘Foolish[ness]’. Inclusion in this catalogue might mark Sidney as extraordinary, but it also suggests his death was a waste. Spenser’s attitude to Sidney as a poet is not necessarily positive. ‘To whom sweet Poets verse hath given endlesse date’ might be read as a reference to Sidney’s own poetry ensuring his immortality, or to that of his funeral elegists. The latter implies that it is the poet’s creation, and not the actions of Sidney himself that have achieved ‘endlesse date’, just as the imposition of the narrative voice in line 8, ‘Me seemes I see’, allows much of Sidney’s myth to be attributed to a poet’s imagination. Despite suggestions of Spenser’s ambivalence, the Garden of Adonis offers a model for Wroth’s depiction of an immortal Sidneian soul that is ‘by succession made perpetuall’.

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that he identifies makes the ‘purple gore’ and ‘wretched fate’ allude to sacrifice rather than just the horror that they imply, pp. 242-256.

<sup>52</sup> For sacrifice, see Test, p. 246. Philip Sidney’s death was presented as a sacrifice to the cause of an international Protestant league by both Mary Sidney and Fulke Greville: for Sidney’s death as ‘Christ-like sacrifice’ in *To the Angel Spirit*, see Tessie L. Prakas, “Unimportant Women: The ‘Sweet Descants’ of Mary Sidney and Richard Crashaw”, *Gender and Song in Early Modern England*, ed. by Katherine Larson and Leslie Dunn (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 114.

Though Lyne treats Spenser's *Faerie Queene* alongside full-length translations of *Metamorphoses*, the circular model of change in Spenser's epic has more in common with that described in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*.<sup>53</sup> *De Rerum Natura* was another important work for Renaissance thinkers – one which was included in the Penshurst library – which should be considered in order to contextualise Wroth's presentation of change in contemporary discourses.<sup>54</sup> Wroth's depiction of the way in which the body changed the soul suggests the possible influence of Lucretius. I suggest this influence more tentatively than that of Spenser, as these ideas might have come through reading Spenser's work; however it is certainly possible that Wroth read *De Rerum Natura* herself.<sup>55</sup> The Lucretian model of eternal renewal that inspired Spenser does begin with an invocation of Venus and argues that everything is made up of particles of matter, which are eternal.<sup>56</sup> This matter does not run out but is transferred.<sup>57</sup> However, controversially, in *De Rerum Natura* Lucretius does not imagine the soul to be immortal, but describes it dissipating after death, like water from a smashed pot (III.434-

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<sup>53</sup> *De Rerum Natura* also provides a model for Ovid (Hardie, *Lucretian Receptions*, p. 136) but the two poets have taken different inspirations from Lucretius' work. Lyne acknowledges many sources for the *Faerie Queene*, but argues that Spenser's epic represents an important treatment of Ovid's (Lyne, p. 83).

<sup>54</sup> Stephen Greenblatt has recently argued for the widespread impact of *De Rerum Natura* on Renaissance thought; however, David Norbrook suggests that Greenblatt overstates its importance: David Norbrook, "Introduction", *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, ed. by David Norbrook (2015), p. 2. For the existence of the work in the Penshurst library, see "L.", *The Library of the Sidneys of Penshurst Place circa 1665*, ed. by Germaine Warkentin, Joseph Black, and William Bowen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), p. 235. This catalogue is taken from a 1665 inventory, so while it is highly likely that the book was part of the Penshurst collection during Wroth's lifetime, it is not certain.

<sup>55</sup> David Butterfield argues for evidence of a female readership of *De Rerum Natura* but offers only one reader (Jane Owen, who gifted a manuscript of the work to the Bodleian Library in 1610): David Butterfield, "Lucretius and the early modern period", *Lucretius and the Early Modern*, ed. by David Norbrook (2015), pp. 51-52; Norbrook discusses a post-Civil War female readership of Lucretius, Norbrook, "Introduction", pp. 21-22.

<sup>56</sup> The invocation to Venus (I.1-43), Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (London: Heinemann, 1924), pp. 2-5.

<sup>57</sup> For example, Lucretius, pp. 89-91.

439). The fine matter of the spirit cannot retain a form outside its body and disperses. The spirit has grown with the body and lives in union with it and is therefore destroyed by the process of death, often breaking before it leaves the body (III.603-614).<sup>58</sup> Lucretius attributes the stench of dying bodies to the trauma of the spirit leaving the body (III. 595-596) and argues that such trauma is proof of the spirit's destruction.<sup>59</sup>

[...] quod si immortalis nostra foret mens,  
non tam se moriens dissolui conquereretur,  
sed magis ire foras vestemque reliquere, ut anguis. (III.612-614)

But if our intelligence were immortal, in dying it would not so much complain of dispersing abroad, but rather of passing out and quitting its vesture like a snake.<sup>60</sup>

The symbiotic nature of the relationship between the body and its spirit means that the spirit is also destroyed or torn up, suggesting that the body has an effect on the spirit, rather than merely acting as a shell. The very model that Lucretius rejects is the closest to the Protestant image of a good death, in which the soul willingly leaves the body. However, there is an element of Lucretius' symbiotic body and soul model that Wroth adopts: 'nam communibus inter se radicibus haerent / nec sine perniciē divelli posse videntur' (III.325-326), 'For they cling together with common roots, and

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<sup>58</sup> Lucretius, pp. 212-213.

<sup>59</sup> Lucretius, pp. 210-211.

<sup>60</sup> Lucretius, pp. 212-213.

manifestly they cannot be torn asunder without destruction.’<sup>61</sup> This image of the body and soul as two plants with shared roots suggests not only closeness, but also mutual influence. Though, as Lucretius points out in the same book, the spirits of different animals are composed differently, thus creating their different characters, this image also reveals how the life of the body affects the soul. It should be noted that Lucretius’ model does not allow the soul to be inherited in the way that Ovid’s does. I suggest Wroth has created a composite model using both Ovid and Lucretius. Wroth has added the Lucretian idea that the soul grows with the body to Ovid’s model from Book XV of the heritable soul, thereby allowing the inheritor (or inheritrix) of the Sidney soul to be more than a vessel. Wroth’s resistance to any identification with Echo, as discussed in Chapter 2, and her performatively heuristic approach to imitation (discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) demonstrate the Lucretian compromise with which she tempers Ovid’s model of change and the soul. In P30 Wroth insists on the importance of the combination of body and soul:

There shall it see the sacrifices made

Of pure and spotlesse Love, which shall not vade,

While soule and body are together found. (P30, lines 12-14)<sup>62</sup>

Despite the assertion of the immortality of her project, Wroth also insists on what her body brings to that constant soul.

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<sup>61</sup> Lucretius, pp. 192-193.

<sup>62</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P30, pp. 222-223.

#### 4.5 The Poet's Two Bodies

In presenting herself as Sidney's literary inheritrix, Wroth draws on existing ideologies of mortal and immortal bodies to present herself as the latest recipient of Sidney's poetic heart. The theory of the monarch's two bodies represents an analogous contemporary idea that is suggestive of the imaginary possibilities open to Wroth. This idea: that the sovereign possessed a body natural and a body politic, and while the body natural might err, age, and die, the body politic was immortal and unerring, passing from one sovereign to the next, would have been familiar to an educated and well-connected woman like Wroth. Indeed, the notion of the monarch's two bodies was deeply ingrained in early modern culture.

In his history of the idea, Ernst Kantorowicz argues that it was far more than an obscure legal quirk, but common legal terminology in England.<sup>63</sup> Kantorowicz demonstrates the presence of this idea in popular culture through its presence in Shakespeare's history plays and argues that Shakespeare might easily have come across the doctrine in conversation with legally-educated friends. Given the theatrical culture of the Inns of Court, Kantorowicz's theory is credible. Wroth's family and social connections would have provided her with ample opportunities to mingle with people who had received a legal education equal to, if not greater than, those in Shakespeare's circles. Moreover, if she had not come across the concept in reading or in conversation Wroth may have encountered the concept as an audience member of Shakespeare's plays.

Wroth's presentation of herself as the inheritor of a constant, Sidneian

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<sup>63</sup> Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 20.



soul suggests a similar imaginative mechanism at work in the early modern presentation of the poet. Her presentation of her poetic voice suggests that the poet, like the monarch, had two bodies, one mortal, and one immortal. The idea of the poet's immortality is one that Wroth's contemporaries would have inherited from ancient literature. Ovid, for example frequently boasts of the immortality that his poetry will afford him, long after his material body, or body natural, is lost.<sup>64</sup> However, in the Renaissance there was a sense that – in figurative terms – a poetic body (the equivalent of the body politic) could be inherited. Ovid was said to live on in Shakespeare, and Jonson carefully constructed an image of himself as the modern-day Horace.<sup>65</sup> Wroth, used this trope to present herself as an inheritor of Sidney's poetic body.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the early modern imagination created a close identification between the poet's work and his (or her) body. The circulation of that body, then, could be viewed as compromising for the socially elite, and most especially for women.<sup>66</sup> Manuscript circulation provided a certain degree of control over who would receive the text: Sidney's *Arcadia*, for example, seems to have been designed for a family audience. Print circulation, in contrast, offers little or no control for the author. The body/text was available for purchase by the *hoi polloi* which would demean the aristocratic author and raise questions about the authority of the non-aristocratic speaker to address the state. In the *Shepheardes Calender* Spenser confronted this anxiety of authority by using paratexts to create another body for himself, protecting himself from such stigmas, and creating

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<sup>64</sup> Barkan, p. 88.

<sup>65</sup> Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 60-61.

an authoritative speaking position. In Colin Clout, Spenser presented a laureate poet, but also a surrogate body. David Lee Miller argues that “The public identity Spenser sought to fashion may be designated by the rhetorical term “ornament”, a kind of synecdoche.’<sup>67</sup> This synecdoche, or insignia, Miller argues, situated Spenser within a hierarchy where he would otherwise have had no legitimacy. Miller contrasts Spenser with Sidney who already had status.<sup>68</sup> Yet Sidney’s status also presented problems, and his literary endeavours also employed a synecdochical figure to separate himself from his poetic self. This figure appeared, not in paratexts – as Sidney did not preside over the printing of his own romance and sonnets - but in the body of his texts, making Philip Sidney both present and absent from his works. Scholars read his presence as Astrophil and Philisides. These figures seem to represent Sidney in the text and to reveal personal details about his desires and thoughts. At the same time, these are pseudonyms. Their presence distances them from the author, provides a veil of anonymity, and in some way reduces the figure to a representation of an attribute of Sidney’s, or of an idea.

Alan Sinfield has argued that Sidney is the first male poet to use a pseudonym in this manner.<sup>69</sup> What does it mean that Philip Sidney uses a pseudonym for his male speaker? The speaker of the sequence is simultaneously identified as a version of Sidney, but also distanced from the poet’s self. The pseudonym creates a distance or separation, but the sobriquet

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<sup>67</sup> David Lee Miller, *The Poem’s Two Bodies: The Poetics of the 1590 Faerie Queene* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 30.

<sup>68</sup> Miller, *The Poem’s Two Bodies*, p. 39.

<sup>69</sup> Alan Sinfield, “Sidney and Astrophil”, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 20. 1 (Winter, 1980), pp. 25-41.

affords no anonymity. The use of the persona might suggest a secret in need of a disguise, an illicit relationship not to be publicly acknowledged (like Catullus' Lesbia). At the same time the pseudonym might suggest that Astrophil is a representation of a quality or attribute. It has been argued that Astrophil represents the part of Sidney that he rejects; the reason-less, passionate self he wishes to repudiate.<sup>70</sup> Sinfield notes that, after Sidney's death and the printing of his work, the two become clearly separated. Astrophil is the poet, Sidney the man. Why must the two be separate? Alexander gives us the answer in his discussion of Wroth's different uses of her poetic forebears. He compares Robert Sidney's work with that of Sir Philip Sidney and suggests that Sidney's work was 'common property', while Robert Sidney's work was private or family property. Indeed, while Philip Sidney's work was circulated in print, Robert Sidney's remained only in manuscript and does not seem to have been widely circulated.<sup>71</sup> Sidney and his work had become the property of everyone; however, this sense of public ownership was difficult to reconcile with Sidney's status as an aristocrat. How might those following Sidney express this communal ownership without being disrespectful? As Sinfield notes, the man is split in two: poet and person. The poet is referred to as Astrophil. Astrophil becomes a proxy body which can, less problematically, be put into the hands of the multitude. In the light of the shame associated with print for the early modern upper class, it is interesting that the courtier poet Astrophil sometimes appears as a shepherd, a body of a different class, as does Philisides in the *Arcadia*. The poet Astrophil can move in places that the mortal body could not and should not.

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<sup>70</sup> Sinfield, p. 29.

<sup>71</sup> Alexander, p. 293.

While there is an authority in being posthumously designated, like the classics, as common property, Sidney's authority also relies on his distance as an aristocratic figure, and one who did not publish poetry in his lifetime at that. Both are simultaneously essential. The body of the poet Astrophil certainly outlived that of the man, Sidney (and was arguably born after Sidney's death) as his work was printed and reprinted, revised, and reprinted again. If Sidney needed a proxy body, then Wroth – as a living woman – had an even greater need for one.

But was this immortal body, like that of the monarch's body politic, transmittable? Does it survive, associated with the body natural of an heir? Certainly, dedications suggest that something of Sidney is not only sustained but renewed by Wroth the writer. For example, Joshua Sylvester's dedication to Wroth reads: 'None but Your Owne AL-WORTH Sidneides / In whom, her uncle's noble vein renews.'<sup>72</sup> Sylvester's vein image recalls Mary Sidney's inky, 'bleeding veins' in *To the Angell spirit* (80). Sidney's veins are reinvigorated with new life. Sylvester combines the classical style patronymic with an anagram of La[dy] Wroth as 'AL-WORTH', referencing Wroth's own worthy position (independent of the Sidney family). There are no claims that Wroth is her uncle reborn, she is recognised as a separate person, not merely an echo, but that his literary genius is reborn in her. Rosalind Smith has highlighted the phoenix imagery that runs throughout *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. Smith also explores the potential political readings of the phoenix (which I discuss in Chapter 5) as the bringer of truth, but the phoenix is also a symbol of eternal life and renewal. Wroth inherits the

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<sup>72</sup> Roberts, 1983, p. 19.

immortal poetic body, just as James I inherits his immortal sovereignty from Elizabeth I.

In the same way that the separation of the sovereign's two bodies became more important in the discourse surrounding Elizabeth I, as Elizabeth's female body natural elicited fears about its frailty and corruptibility, so such a separation was more important for a woman writer.<sup>73</sup> The idea of the circulating text, linked in the early modern imagination with the circulating body, becomes more contentious for the woman writer, therefore the separation between the two bodies must be more distinct. The persona is a half visor, protecting the modesty of the wearer, but by no means truly disguising who is underneath. The author simultaneously is, and is not, the persona. In Wroth's work we see a more profound disguise at work at the same time, a disguise of the body, rather than just the face. Many Wroth scholars have commented on the absence of the body in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. The traditional blazon of the beloved is absent from the sequence, thus removing the level of sexuality that simmers throughout sequences like *Astrophil and Stella*. But what of the female lover's body? The very physical image of the flaming heart shut inside the body appears at the start of the sonnet sequence in P1.<sup>74</sup> As I have argued in this chapter, in the sequence Pamphilia's body is often presented as somehow hollow, an architectural space to store the immortal spirit, the Sidney poetic body. The poet, however, cannot write about housing the spirit in her own body natural

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<sup>73</sup> For the importance of the doctrine of the monarch's two bodies to Elizabeth I, see Marie Axton, *Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), p. 12; Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) pp. 106-107.

<sup>74</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P1, p. 205.

because to do so would risk sexualising that body, so Wroth creates Pamphilia as a proxy body. Unlike Sidney, who chooses a shepherd, the synecdochal body Wroth chooses is that of a queen. I shall argue at the end of the next chapter that as well as a stand-in for Wroth herself, Pamphilia is also a representation of Elizabeth I. Despite her status as a ‘Sidney, though un-nam’d’, and her courtly connections, Wroth could not take authority for granted with her status because she was a woman. The body of a queen provided Wroth with an authoritative, legitimate, female voice.

By presenting a poetic body (another self, at once closer and at a further remove than a persona) Wroth also strengthens the idea of a Sidneian inheritance. Just as, in monarchical succession, the body politic is passed down from one sovereign to the next, the same soul in the new body, so too the poet has some kind of immortal spirit that can be preserved in a new vessel. This succession, like the monarchical succession, authorised and communicated continuity, but did not suggest an homogeneous identity. Wroth also presented a body natural that was female, authoritative, and one that changed and updated the message of the immortal poetic spirit – as demonstrated through a Lucretian approach to the spirit-body relationship. Thus, Pamphilia’s constancy is extended backwards, co-opting and transforming the myth of Sidney and Astrophil to give the impression of a constancy that has not wavered for generations. This concept is illustrated through Wroth’s repeated references to Ovid’s epic of change, and at its centre, the philosophy that the soul remains the same. Wroth’s use of Ovid also places her in a ‘Spenserian’ tradition, as she echoes her predecessors’ use of Ovid as an authority (not just Sidney, but also Daniel, and notably Spenser

in his *Faerie Queene*).<sup>75</sup> The next chapter will consider the influence on Wroth's work of another contemporary discourse strongly associated with Spenserian politics: Neo-stoicism.

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<sup>75</sup> Burrow, pp. 312-313.

## 5. Neo-stoic Constancy

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapters 2-4 have argued that Wroth drew upon literary authorities – Ovid and Sidney – and used a method of heuristic imitation to respond to these texts. The next two chapters will be concerned with influence rather than imitation. Rather than examining moments in which Wroth has alluded to an authority, here I examine the influence on Wroth’s work of the contemporary discourse of Neo-stoicism. This chapter will contribute to an argument that Wroth’s sonnet sequence should be read as an endorsement of mixed monarchy (that is a monarch ruling with aristocratic counsel as opposed to an absolutist monarch). Over the course of Chapters 5 and 6 I will argue that in the figure of the sonnet speaker, Pamphilia, Wroth presents an exemplar of an ideal monarch and an ideal subject in a mode heavily influenced by Neo-stoic philosophy. This chapter focusses on Pamphilia as a subject. Elaine Beilin and others have highlighted the Calvinist dimension of Wroth’s sequence; this chapter will build on that scholarship to include Neo-stoic discourses. I will argue that the sequence is a didactic model of how to improve the soul through the scourges of love to attain true constancy: a process which Wroth represents as ongoing. I will draw parallels between Wroth’s sequence and Justus Lipsius’ thematically similar *On Constancy* in order to highlight the Neo-stoic nature of Wroth’s work. I contextualise Wroth’s work by comparing her presentation of Neo-stoic constancy in *Urania* to Fulke Greville’s *Letter to an Honourable Lady*.



## 5.2 Striving for Constancy

The constancy that Wroth promotes through the figure of Pamphilia is heavily influenced by Neo-stoic discourses. One of the most influential figures in the development of early modern Neo-stoicism was Justus Lipsius, author of *On Constancy*.<sup>1</sup> I will therefore begin by introducing Lipsius and his significance to writers connected to Sidney's legacy of challenging absolutist monarchy. I will then move on to demonstrate the ways in which Wroth draws upon Neo-stoic concepts.

Lipsius' *On Constancy* transformed Senecan Stoicism by fusing it with Tacitean political thought and making it compatible with Christianity. Lipsius' commentaries on Tacitus were highly significant, and Penelope Anderson argues that many contemporary readers came to Tacitus through Lipsius' linking of Tacitus and Seneca.<sup>2</sup> Arguing that Lipsius' influence on political thought 'can hardly be overstated', Halvard Leira presents the number of editions Lipsius' works – *On Constancy* and *Politica* – received:

*De Constantia* was printed 44 times in Latin, 15 times in French, translated to Dutch, English, German, Spanish, Italian and Polish, totalling over eighty editions between the 16<sup>th</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> First published in 1584, *De Constantia* was 'the most important attempt to reconcile Stoicism with Christianity' and inspired what we now call Neo-stoicism (John Sellars, "Introduction", *Justus Lipsius On Constancy*, trans. by John Stradling, ed. by John Sellars (Bristol Phoenix Press, 2006), pp. 2 and 5). For details of Lipsius' biography and his fluctuating religious affiliations, see Christopher Brooke, *Philosophic Pride: Stoicism and Political Thought from Lipsius to Rousseau* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 12-13. For religious vacillation and an account of Lipsius' relationship with Philip Sidney see, Roger Kuin, *The Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney*, Vol I, ed. by Roger Kuin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. xlix.

<sup>2</sup> Penelope Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows: Women's Friendship and the Politics of Betrayal in England, 1640-1705* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 156.

18<sup>th</sup> centuries. And even that was surpassed by the *Politica*, which was printed in 96 editions from 1589 to 1751, in Latin, Dutch, French, English, Polish, German, Spanish, Italian and Hungarian.<sup>3</sup>

The central principle of these two popular works was constancy. In *On Constancy* Lipsius advises the subject, while his *Politica* offers advice to princes. *On Constancy* is written as a conversation between Lipsius and Charles Langius about how to bear the suffering of civil war. Langius' voice presents the authoritative Neo-stoic argument while the Lipsius character asks questions, learns, and defers to Langius' knowledge. The Stoic idea of endurance is repackaged under the name constancy, a Christian virtue. Constancy in the face of adversity is figured in the language of Christian martyrdom. Lipsius' description of bettering the self through purging by fire and other violence is reminiscent of the 'fiery trials' in 1 Peter 4.12-13:

Dearly beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is among you to prove you as though some strange thing were come unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, that when his glory shall appear, ye may be glad and rejoice.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Halyard Leira, "Justus Lipsius, Political Humanism and the Disciplining of 17<sup>th</sup> Century Statecraft", *Review of International Studies*, 34, 4 (2008), p. 685.

<sup>4</sup> Peter 4.12-13, *The Bible and Holy Scriptures Contayned in the Olde and Newe Testament* (Geneva: Roland Hall, 1560).

Just as religious martyrs strengthened the faith of others, so Lipsius argues that by remaining virtuous in suffering the constant man can provoke virtue in others. As well as facing suffering, the constant man must maintain his constancy in an endlessly changing world. Constancy, however, is not the same as passivity or conservatism. The Christianised Stoicism of the Middle Ages counselled that those surrounded by distressing and changeable circumstances should cultivate an inner virtue, disconnected from the outside world, that would allow them to accept whatever should come with equanimity.<sup>5</sup> Lipsius' innovation was to connect ancient Stoicism with politics, urging the virtuous to engage with the outside world in all its turmoil.<sup>6</sup> This central, constant self, must also engage outwardly with the changing politics of the world: this is what Adriana McCrea terms the Lipsian Paradigm.

Lipsius' *Politica* was an advice book for princes, and in its day, this guide for governance was more popular and influential than even Machiavelli's *The Prince*.<sup>7</sup> The conversational style of *On Constancy* is left behind in this book in favour of direct axioms and sententiae organised thematically. Lipsius' advice is practical: for example, Book III of the *Politica* advises the need for 'prudence' in a monarch, suggesting that it is more effective than violence or tyranny. Prudence is the 'gentle bridle' that bends men to obedience willingly. Lipsius reasons that since even animals cannot be tamed without this 'gentle prudence', it is not logical to expect that humans will be: 'We are by nature wild, indomitable, intolerant even of what

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<sup>5</sup> Adriana McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England 1584-1650* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), pp. 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> McCrea, p. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Robert C. Evans, *Jonson, Lipsius and the Politics of Renaissance Stoicism* (Colorado: Longwood Academic Durango, 1992), pp. 10-11.

is fair, let alone of servitude.’<sup>8</sup> Man is as wild as any animal and needs an equal amount of ‘gentle prudence’. While Lipsius is a definite proponent of monarchy as the ideal form of governance, he does not encourage absolutist rule, advising that ‘many things which nature has made difficult are achieved by wise counsel.’<sup>9</sup> He emphasises the Prince’s need for ‘friends’ and ‘counsellors’, and posits the high value of learning in advisors, by calling upon the authorities of Tacitus, Pliny, Sallust (perhaps suggesting republican ideas), and others as authorities to promote the need for and importance of those who assist their monarch ‘primarily with words and thinking’. The counsellor is the most important of all the prince’s supporters, and ‘giving counsel is the most godlike of human activities.’<sup>10</sup> Among the chief virtues of a good counsellor, Lipsius lists ‘constancy’. Wroth’s positioning of her poetic speaker, who is in some ways her avatar, as the embodiment of constancy therefore strikes a particular chord for readers attuned to Lipsius’ writings as a figure representing the ideal counsellor.<sup>11</sup> Although Wroth depicts Pamphilia and the personified Constancy melding into one upon meeting in the *Urania*, an assertion of constancy on Pamphilia’s part might be perplexing to punctilious readers, especially in the sonnet sequence, as its speaker runs the gamut of emotions often to be found in love poetry. Wroth’s contemporaries, familiar with Lipsius’ *Politica*, would understand Pamphilia’s constancy as the ‘prudent’ sort suitable to a counsellor who ‘does

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<sup>8</sup> Justus Lipsius, *Politica: Six Books of Politics or Political Instruction*, ed. and trans. by Jan Waszink (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2004), p. 349.

<sup>9</sup> Lipsius, *Politica*, p. 349.

<sup>10</sup> Lipsius, *Politica*, p. 353.

<sup>11</sup> Lipsius, *Politica*, p. 359. For Pamphilia’s melding into the figure of Constancy, see Wroth, *The First Part of the Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, ed. by Josephine Roberts (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies), p. 169; *The Early Modern Englishwoman: Mary Wroth*, Part 1, Volume 10 (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), p. 141.

not hold fast to his course, but to his destination.’<sup>12</sup> Wroth’s careful demonstration of her learning (through the use of classical authorities such as Ovid, demonstrated in Chapters 2-4) also proves her to be the sort of counsellor which Lipsius describes.

The works of Lipsius would have been both available to Wroth, and attractive to her as an author favoured by both her uncle and father. The catalogue of the Sidneys’ library, amassed by Wroth’s father, and then her younger brother, contains several entries under Lipsius’ name. The selection includes translations and commentaries on Tacitus, two copies of *On Constancy* and four or more copies of Lipsius’ *Politica*.<sup>13</sup> The Sidneys were not unusual in their collection of these popular texts. They did, however, have a connection to Lipsius through Philip Sidney. Sidney met Lipsius in 1577 in Leiden and thereafter began their correspondence; they met again in 1586.<sup>14</sup> After Leicester’s arrival in Louvain in 1586, he and his entourage went to hear Lipsius lecture on Tacitus at Leiden University, and invited him to dinner.<sup>15</sup> Sidney was not present at that dinner as he was at The Hague, but visited Lipsius a month later, when they enjoyed a conversation that inspired Lipsius’ *De recta pronuntiatione*.<sup>16</sup> Impressed by Lipsius’ work, Sidney recommended Lipsius’ translation of Tacitus to his younger brother Robert. Robert Sidney’s personal copy of the 1585 edition of Lipsius’ Tacitus is

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<sup>12</sup> Lipsius, *Politica*, p. 359.

<sup>13</sup> “L”, *The Library of the Sidneys of Penshurst Place circa 1665*, ed. by Germaine Warkentin, Joseph L. Black, and William R. Bowen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 230-231.

<sup>14</sup> Jan Van Dorsten, “The Final Year”, *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend*, ed. by Jan Adrianus van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith, Arthur F. Kinney (Leiden: J.E. Brill, 1986), p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Kuin, vol I, p. xlix.

<sup>16</sup> Alan Stewart, *Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: Pimlico, 2001), pp. 296-297; Van Dorsten, pp. 22-23. Katherine Duncan-Jones also notes the correspondence between Sidney and Lipsius, but it is far less important in her narrative of Sidney’s affairs: Katherine Duncan-Jones, *Sir Philip Sidney, Courtier Poet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1991), p. 294.

heavily annotated, and his notes compare contemporary England to Tacitus' Rome.<sup>17</sup> In Sidney, Lipsius may have seen a potential patron, or even a leader for a cause. McCrea goes so far as to place Philip Sidney at the very heart of Lipsius' formulation of Neo-stoicism: 'Lipsius, in devising Neo-stoicism, identified the model of virtue represented by Sidney, appropriated it, and applied it to both *On Constancy* and the *Politica*.'<sup>18</sup> It is very unlikely that Sidney personally inspired Lipsius' philosophy of Neo-stoicism, however there was certainly a meeting of minds as revealed through their ongoing correspondence.

Lipsius' works were held up as an authority for a large number of religious and political agendas, and often these were incompatible with one another.<sup>19</sup> His writing was drawn upon both to support and to criticise absolutist rule.<sup>20</sup> However, Lipsius' political philosophy became very attractive to Sidney's political heirs (or those who identified themselves as such), in particular, the Essex circle, who found themselves 'on the fringes' of the English court in the reigns of both Elizabeth and James.<sup>21</sup> Tacitus' histories uncompromisingly highlighted corruption and tyranny in absolutist rulers; Lipsius' use of this authority brought bite to his brand of Stoicism, making it an appealing philosophy for militant Protestants and compatible

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<sup>17</sup> McCrea, p. 32.

<sup>18</sup> McCrea, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> Evans, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> McCrea, p. 31.

<sup>21</sup> Brooke, pp. 67-68. For the connection between Protestant militant interventionism and Neo-stoicism, see Joel Davies, "Multiple Arcadias and the Literary Quarrel between Fulke Greville and the Countess of Pembroke", *Ashgate Critical Essays on Women Writers in England, 1550-1700, Volume 2: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke*, ed. by Margaret P. Hannay (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), p. 290. For the association between Lipsius' English publisher and the Sidney and Herbert families, see Steven Mentz, "Selling Sidney: William Ponsonby, Thomas Nashe, and the Boundaries of Elizabethan Print and Manuscript Cultures", *Text*, vol. 13, (2000), pp. 151-174.

with ‘political activism’.<sup>22</sup> Wroth, engaged as she was with the political concerns of her family would have been familiar with the Neo-stoic discourses exemplified in Lipsius’ work.<sup>23</sup>

The motif of the constant soul within a changing world that this thesis has already identified in Wroth’s work can also be identified in Lipsius’ model of Neo-stoicism. Lipsius argues that while the virtuous man should achieve constancy of mind, he must also continue to engage with an endlessly changing outer world. Lipsius states that suffering provides the scourge that will improve the soul and lead to constancy. This idea of improvement through scourging is also present in Wroth’s work. The language of burning in love can be seen as typical of the yearning lover-sonneteer, of the religious sufferer, but the fires of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* are also akin to the purging and purifying of the soul that Lipsius describes in *On Constancy*. Lipsius offers himself as a pupil to Langius:

“I am your patient prepared to admit any kind of curing, be it by a razor or fire, to cut or sear”. “I must use both those means”, said Langius, “for that one while the stubble of false opinions is to be burned away, and the other while the tender slips of affections to be cut off by the root.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Evans, 1992, p.2; Anderson, p.156; Leira, p. 673.

<sup>23</sup> For the letters that show Wroth’s active engagement with foreign affairs, see Julie Crawford, *Mediatix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 176-177. For Wroth as an authority on ‘news from beyond the sea’, see Anne Clifford, *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. by D.J.H. Clifford (Stroud: Alan Stutton Publishing Ltd, 1990), p. 61.

<sup>24</sup> Justus Lipsius, *Justus Lipsius On Constancy*, trans. by John Stradling, ed. by John Sellars (Bristol: Phoenix Press, 2006), p. 41.

Lipsius presents a process by which one can become constant: opinion, which vacillates and is based in fleeting things is burned away, leaving only reason. It is this idea of process that is essential to reading *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*.

Despite Pamphilia's frequent association with constancy, she moves through different moods including despair, grief, and hope. While Wroth describes different aspects of love, Pamphilia does remain constant, in that she does not desert her love; she remains a lover. The sequence, however, is not without fluctuation, and there does seem to be a form of progression. Elaine Beilin has suggested that the sequence represents a move from secular to sacred love.<sup>25</sup> However, I argue that Beilin's identification of religious imagery, while valuable, does not provide a complete picture. Instead, the sequence must be read as a cyclical process in which the speaker strives for constancy through suffering. Sonnet P55 provides an example of this discourse:

How like a fire doth Love increase in me?

The longer that it lasts the stronger still;

The greater, purer, brighter; and doth fill

No eye with wonder more then hopes still bee.

Bred in my breast, when fires of Love are free

To use that part to their best pleasing will,

And now impossible it is to kill

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<sup>25</sup> Elaine Beilin, *Redeeming Eve: Women Writers of the English Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 208-245.



The heate so great where Love his strength doth see.

Mine eyes can scarce sustaine the flames, my heart  
Doth trust in them my passions to impart,  
And languishingly strive to shew my love.

My breath not able is to breath least part  
Of that increasing fuell of my smart;  
Yet love I will, till I but ashes prove.

*Pamphilia.*<sup>26</sup>

At the opening of P55, love is described as like a fire. Its increase in size only increases its power. The fire, like that described by Lipsius, seems to have a purgative effect. As it grows the fire is 'The greater, purer, brighter'. The inclusion of 'purer' in this line highlights the cleansing nature of the flames. This conflagration is presented as a spectacle, the love-fire 'doth fill / No eye with wonder more', and Pamphilia's eyes 'strive to shew [her] love'.

Pamphilia states her determination to suffer until she is consumed ('Yet love I will, till I but ashes prove'), making this a martyrdom to love. Wroth uses Pamphilia's constancy in suffering and figurative martyrdom to promote the emulation of virtue. Pamphilia's 'hopes' that are 'bred in [her] breast' act as a fuel for the fiery love, as the fires 'use that part to their best pleasing will' making it 'unpossible [...] to kill'. Hope surely falls into Lipsius' category of Opinion (which must be burned away), so to see this as the fuel for

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<sup>26</sup> Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), P55, pp. 237-238.

Pamphilia's conflagration seems appropriately in keeping with *On Constancy*. What is most significant about this poem is its position within the sequence. Though appearing before the *corona*, it represents a turning point. This change is not because of a move to divine love, as Beilin suggests, but rather represents a significant step forwards in Pamphilia's burning away of all other variables to achieve true constancy.

For Beilin, the sequence, which is 'an integral part of the *Urania*', follows Pamphilia's realisation that it is not a man, but the God of Love who is the true recipient of her constancy. Though it is seemingly in the style of an Elizabethan sonnet sequence, Pamphilia's voice does not make an attempt to seduce or to describe the beauty of the beloved. Beilin describes Pamphilia's journey away from applying her constancy to an earthly love (the unworthy Amphilanthus) to the more appropriate and congruent object of her constancy, the divine. Beilin's work is exciting, but her argument requires expansion as she does not account for the links between the Calvinist language identified and contemporary Neo-stoic, political discourse. There is certainly a movement in the sequence, but it cannot be described as a straightforward trajectory from earthly to divine love, as the sequence suggests something more akin to a circular journey.

The incomplete nature of Beilin's interpretation of the sequence as a movement to divine love is revealed in the poems following the *corona*. While she cites the *corona* as a turning point, Beilin does not deal thoroughly with what comes next. The song following the *corona* (P91) is considered rather cursorily.<sup>27</sup> Though the song seems to be a 'traditional song from lover

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<sup>27</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P91, pp. 258-259.

to beloved' Beilin suggests 'its diction resonates with the spiritual: "Sweet," "injoye," "bright," "sun," "spring," "delight," [...] "flames of Faith," "burne," "life," "blessed," "light".'<sup>28</sup> While 'flames of faith' and 'blessed' have strong spiritual connotations, the others, while common in a spiritual context, are also to be found as commonplaces of love poetry, neither is the use of religious imagery in erotic poetry uncommon. Beilin goes on to mention lines from a few other sonnets which highlight a 'hidden [religious] meaning' behind what on the surface is romantic love.<sup>29</sup> However, the fact that the majority of sonnets and songs in the section are problematic for Beilin's argument is a factor that is left unexplored. Far from acting as a turning point in the sequence, the *corona* does not seem to have set the speaker on a true path, guided by the thread of love. At first glance it seems that this is not the case: these poems seem almost to return to the beginning of Wroth's sequence, with its concerns of courtly love. Many of the songs and sonnets following the end of the *corona* are seemingly engaged in ideas of shallow, romantic love, but neither is Josephine Roberts correct that Wroth's project of idealising love has failed.<sup>30</sup> Achieving and maintaining constancy should be seen as an ongoing process (as it is represented in *On Constancy*). Rather than a turning point, the *corona* should be seen as a centre point, or as a moment of clarity in an ongoing process of purification.

The poems after the *corona* illustrate that Wroth's crown of sonnets is one circle amongst many concentric and intertwined circles. In the following paragraphs I will illustrate the cyclical progression of the sequence. While a

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<sup>28</sup> Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, p.240.

<sup>29</sup> Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, pp. 240-241.

<sup>30</sup> *The Poems of Lady Mary Wroth*, ed. by Josephine A. Roberts (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 136.

sense of progression exists, there is a sense of a return to the beginning of the entire sequence. For example, sonnet P92 is one in which Pamphilia seems to have regressed from the spiritual tone of the *corona*, to the concerns of earthly love and Love returns as the Anacreontic Cupid, which Roberts sees as symbolic of Pamphilia's failure to 'idealize Cupid as a noble ruler in the *corona*'.<sup>31</sup> This is because the struggle for constancy, as Wroth presents it, is an ongoing process. I will demonstrate this process with reference to P98, P94, and P101. P98 sees a lapse back into jealousy but illustrates Pamphilia's journey towards constancy in miniature as she learns to close her eyes to jealousy. P94 seeks to reconcile love with Neo-stoicism and argues that earthly love can be a divine scourge. The theme of purification through fire is picked up again in P101 in which Wroth confidently asserts the cleansing powers of love.

Despite choosing to reject jealousy in the *corona*, Pamphilia continues to be beset by jealousy in the poems following the *corona*. However, in P98 Wroth depicts Pamphilia learning. The sonnet sees Pamphilia's process as she identifies that jealousy comes in at the eyes and is able to separate these outward fluctuations from an inner core of constancy:

When I beheld the Image of my deare,  
 With greedy lookes mine eies would that way bend  
 Feare, and Desire, did inwardly contend;  
 Feare to be mark'd, Desire to draw still neere.

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<sup>31</sup> Roberts, p. 136. Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P92, pp. 259-260.

And in my soule a Spirit would appeare,  
Which boldnes warranted, and did pretend  
To be my *Genius*; yet I durst not lend,  
My eyes in trust, where others seem'd so cleare.

Then did I search, from whence this danger rose,  
If such unworthynesse in me did rest,  
As my starv'd eyes must not with sight be blest,  
When Jealousie her poyson did disclose.

Yet in my heart unseene of Jealous eye,  
The truer Image shall in tryumph lye.<sup>32</sup>

At the opening of the sonnet, Wroth's speaker returns to the preoccupation with looking that featured in the early sonnets of the sequence (P2, P3, P5). However, it is also clear that the speaker is considering past behaviour that is now complete (indicated by 'When' and the tense of the verbs: 'beheld', 'did', 'durst'). Continuing the theme of P65, in which the jealous eyes of Argus are put out by Night, allowing love to triumph, in P98 Wroth connects jealousy to 'eies'. The 'greedy looks' lead directly to inner turmoil between 'Feare, and Desire'. Wroth's repetition of 'Feare' and 'Desire' in lines three and four emphasises a sense of turmoil and indicate a pattern of repeated behaviour. The frantic turning evoked by these two lines recalls the labyrinth at the opening of the *corona*. The 'appear[ance]' of the false '*Genius*', characterised

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<sup>32</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P98, pp. 263-264.

as an intruder or usurper, emphasises the external source of corruption. In line nine Pamphilia begins a process of active self-reflection, and then (line 11) concludes that Jealousy finds her route in at the eyes. In another echo of P65, Pamphilia suggests that she must be – figuratively – blinded (‘must not with sight be blest’) in order to avoid the corruptions (‘poyson’) of the external. As Beilin also notes, both P98 and P100 end on the idea of an internal integrity concerning love.<sup>33</sup> Just as Pamphilia is the constant figure surrounded by change, so we see this pattern echoed in the speaker’s own self. Although she has an inner core of integrity that ultimately ‘tryumph[s]’, she must learn not to be swayed by external factors. This process of rejection of external ‘opinions’ in order to nurture the constant self is a key feature of Lipsian Neo-Stoicism, as is Pamphilia’s process of learning.<sup>34</sup>

The theme of instruction that runs throughout the sequence continues in P94. In this song Pamphilia urges others to love well and virtuously. The speaker instructs lovers to ‘speake but truth’, and ‘Vow no more then what you’le doe’.<sup>35</sup> However, far from a meditation on divine virtue the poem reads as a response to a popular anti-Petrarchan trope. The sonnet points out the faulty logic inherent in poems like Pembroke’s ‘Disdain me still, that I may ever love’ (this is just one example of a common trope) in which the speaker’s desire for the beloved wanes after she has returned his affections or will

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<sup>33</sup> Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, p. 240.

<sup>34</sup> In the previous chapter, section 4.4, I considered Spenser’s influence on Wroth’s work. Christopher Burlinson has argued that the process of learning depicted in Spenser and induced by reading Spenser – which can be compared to the process I identify here in Wroth’s work – is innately Protestant and Lipsian in its Neo-stoicism: Christopher Burlinson, “Spenser’s ‘Legend of Constancie’: Book VII and the Ethical Reader”, *Celebrating Mutabilitie: Essays on Edmund Spenser’s Mutabilitie Cantos*, ed. by Jane Grogan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 214-217.

<sup>35</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P94, pp. 260-261.

disappear if she does so.<sup>36</sup> Pamphilia dismisses this as ‘folly’ and not truly love in the first place. The poem provides an answer to a contemporary trope and as such appears dialogic rather than solipsistic.<sup>37</sup> In this way the poem is concerned with social interaction and romantic, earthly love. Yet, in the same song, Wroth also uses divine imagery in this exhortation to virtue: ‘Thinke it sacriledge to breake / What you promise, shall in love.’ Towards the end of the poem religious imagery appears again with the closing four lines:

Flye this folly, and returne  
Unto truth in Love, and try,  
None but Martir’s happy burne,  
More shamefull ends they have that lye.

Wroth equates the suffering for love with the suffering of a martyr, yet in her phrasing does not equate love and the divine. Although Wroth uses the word ‘Martir’ there is no danger that Pamphilia will die; the flames that torture her are those of love, not literal flames. When Pamphilia urges lovers to ‘think it sacriledge’ she allows that it is not sacrilege, ‘think[ing]’ must make it so. The lover must behave as if it were sacrilege. This exhortation, then, draws comparisons between love and the divine, but also reveals the differences between them. The love in this sonnet is not divine, yet virtuously suffering in love likens the lover to a martyr. This sonnet goes to the heart of the problematic relationship Wroth has created between a Neo-stoic, Lipsian

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<sup>36</sup> Pembroke, *The Poems of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke*, ed. by Robert Krueger (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1961), p. 40.

<sup>37</sup> Chapter 6 will discuss the discursive and interactive nature of poetry in this period and Wroth’s connections to coterie activity.

constancy, and constancy in love. Here Wroth considers a potential solution to reconcile romantic love with Neo-stoicism. Love itself is not perfect, but its effects provide the painful purification that can produce constancy. Love, even when separated from the lust described in Pembroke's poem, is not itself wholly noble but its effects can be. This careful division, however, is not borne out throughout the sequence. Sometimes Wroth, as Beilin notes, suggests love is the ideal monarch, and is a cipher for the divine, rather than a means through which to reach it. It can only be concluded that there are two personified Love figures in the sequence, one who is God, and one who is earthly love, embodied in Cupid. What is particularly important about this sonnet, however, is Wroth's decision to connect the creation of the constant soul with social interaction. The idea of continued engagement with the outside world (whilst developing one's constant mind) is a key tenet of Lipsian constancy.

Wroth makes explicit that love acts as a cleansing scourge to Pamphilia in P101. Beilin's argument lingers on this poem and its clearly religious, apocalyptic imagery. However, this poem, with its contemplation of divine perfection is also the key to why Pamphilia's constancy must be seen as a quality that is developed, honed and sustained throughout the sequence, rather than as a finished product:

No time, no roome, no thought, or writing can

Give rest, or quiet to my loving heart,

Or can my memory, or Phant'sie scan,

The measure of my still renewing smart.



Yet would I not (deare Love) thou should'st depart,  
But let my passions as they first began,  
Rule, wound, and please, it is thy choysest Art,  
To give disquiet, which seemes ease to man.

When all alone, I thinke upon thy paine,  
How thou dost travell our best selves to gaine,  
Then houerly thy lessons I doe learne;

Thinke on thy glory, which shall still ascend,  
Untill the world come to a finall end,  
And then shall we thy lasting powre discern.<sup>38</sup>

Wroth's opening list in this sonnet emphasises the extremity of Pamphilia's situation, that nothing can give her heart rest from love. The pain does not lessen over time as it constantly renews force ('still renewing smart'). Wroth also suggests that each renewal is perhaps more painful than its predecessor as neither Pamphilia's memory nor her imagination can 'scan / The measure' of the smart. The use of 'scan' and 'measure' make this a meta-poetic pun. On one level this vocabulary denotes straightforward analysis or measurement, but both are also terms related to poetry; Pamphilia analyses her pain as if it were verse or music. Despite this extremity Pamphilia declares that she does not want 'dear love' to 'depart' because this pain is transformative. In lines 9-11 Wroth's speaker explains that Love's work ('travell') is to 'gaine' 'our best

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<sup>38</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P101, p. 265.

selves'. When Pamphilia meditates upon love's labour, 'Then houerly thy lessons I doe learne'. The pain of love is not only instructive, but repeatedly so. The lessons come hourly, thus revealing why Pamphilia cannot assign a metre to it: the pain is constantly growing and changing.

There is clearly another layer to this poem than a simple assertion that love is a scourging, improving flame. Love is also divine. The contemplative tone of line nine, and the shift to 'thy paine' (as opposed to my) suggests Pamphilia is addressing God or Christ. The final three lines confirm this reading of love as divine, which describes the increase of love's 'glory' until the 'world come to a finall end' after which 'shall we thy lasting powre discerne.' The narrative is of the Calvinist, Neo-stoic journey of self-improvement to the glory of God until the final Judgement Day, and then the eternal life thereafter superimposes itself on the sonnet and forces a re-reading. The sonnet can be read as if the love that pains Pamphilia were the love of God, or as if the suffering of earthly love were leading her towards a state of virtue acceptable to God. The doubleness or ambiguity here is intentional and encourages an uncertainty in the reading of the rest of the sequence. The reader cannot be sure which Love is being meditated upon at any time.

### 5.3 Greville's *Letter to an Honourable Lady*

The influence of Neo-stoicism on Wroth's sonnet sequence is also evidenced by the parallels between Wroth's work and Greville's *Letter to an Honourable Lady*. The similarities between Wroth's and Greville's

presentation of female heroism, and their focus on constancy, are evidence of Wroth's engagement with a contemporary political, Neo-stoic discourse. Reading Wroth's sequence alongside Greville's *Letter* also helps to resolve one of the interpretive problems of Wroth's presentation of constancy as virtue that does not require an object. Both writers promote a Lipsian model of constancy, but Greville does so through an epistolary admonishment, while Wroth does so through the exemplary figure of Pamphilia.<sup>39</sup>

Greville's *Letter to an Honourable Lady* is an epistolary prose work that sets out advice as to how the honourable lady should deal with the infidelities of her husband. While John Gouws argues that the *Letter* was composed between 1595 and 1601, it was not printed until the posthumous 1633 folio of Greville's work.<sup>40</sup> The letter has been interpreted both as a political allegory about how a subject ought to interact with a monarch, and as a response to the real-life situation of a lady, probably Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland, to whom Samuel Daniel dedicated his *Letter to Octavia* which deals with similar themes.<sup>41</sup> The two interpretations are not mutually exclusive. Greville more than once draws a parallel between the situation of the wife with an inconstant husband and that of the subject under a tyrant.<sup>42</sup> Greville urges the lady to cultivate a Stoic acceptance of her situation. The lady's husband is characterised as changeable, a characteristic that Wroth assigns to the character of Amphilanthus, and the lady is urged to

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<sup>39</sup> For Greville's *Letter to an Honourable Lady* as an example of engagement with a 'Lipsian paradigm' of Neo-stoicism, see McCrea, pp. 113-116.

<sup>40</sup> Gouws, "General Introduction", p. xxx.

<sup>41</sup> David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 149; John Gouws, "General Introduction", *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville Lord Brooke*, ed. by John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. xxvi-xxix.

<sup>42</sup> Fulke Greville, "A Letter to an Honourable Lady", *The Prose Works of Fulke Greville Lord Brooke*, ed. by John Gouws (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), pp. 154, 164.

respond with a contrasting constancy. Both reverse the tradition that fickleness is a female vice. The constancy that Greville describes is both Christian and Stoic and has much in common with Lipsius' description of the virtue in his Neo-stoic treatise *On Constancy*. Greville's *Letter* and Wroth's sequence are not only thematically similar, but also include some similar imagery. For example, in the first line of Wroth's *corona* (P77) Pamphilia – the female speaker – asks: 'In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne[?]'<sup>43</sup> Greville employs a similar image, situating the lady in a labyrinth.<sup>44</sup> Both can be compared to Lipsius' advice for a good life in Book One of *On Constancy*: 'Who so obeys [Reason] is lord of all lusts and rebellious affections, who so has this thread of Theseus may pass without straying through all the labyrinths of this life.'<sup>45</sup> As I argue in Chapter 3, Wroth presents Pamphilia in the role of Theseus and suggests the way through the labyrinth is to 'take the threed of Love.'<sup>46</sup> The imagery shared by Wroth and Greville is not unique to Lipsian Neo-stoicism and can also be found in both devotional and Petrarchan poetry. However, I believe that the confluence of imagery between the work of Lipsius, Greville, and Wroth supports the idea that Wroth was influenced by contemporary Neo-stoic thought.

I will now examine the similarity between Greville's instruction to the honourable lady to avoid the extremes of both hope and fear and the presentation of hope in Wroth's sonnet sequence. While Greville's prose treatment of this idea fits neatly into an image of the carefully steered ship, Wroth's argument is dramatised across her whole sequence. Greville exhorts

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<sup>43</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P77, p. 251.

<sup>44</sup> Greville, "A Letter to an Honourable Lady", pp. 137, 154.

<sup>45</sup> Lipsius, *On Constancy*, p. 39.

<sup>46</sup> P77, line 14 and P78, line 1.

the lady not to trust herself to a 'leakinge shippe of humane power, and affections. Because all thinges there are so govern'd by the two false rudders of Hope, and Feare.'<sup>47</sup> Greville urges the Lady to reject both Hope and Fear in order to attain constancy which is represented as a state of equilibrium between the two. Wroth's sonnet sequence represents Pamphilia's struggle towards attaining that same state of constancy. The rejection of hope in the sonnet sequence is not characterised as despair, but a perfect equilibrium. As I have already described in this chapter, Pamphilia's journey towards Neo-stoic constancy is not a linear narrative of achievement, but a continual process. The sequence features moments of despair, but this feeling, too, is rejected as an unsuitable extreme. In the following pages I will concentrate on Pamphilia's rejection of hope, followed by her rejection of despair.

While Pamphilia sometimes rejoices in hope, Wroth depicts hope as problematic in her speaker's quest for constancy. Throughout the sequence hope is questioned or condemned.<sup>48</sup> In Chapter 2 I compared Wroth's treatment of hope in P31 to Philip Sidney's treatment in *Astrophil and Stella* 67. I have argued that Wroth describes hope as an enemy and a traitor with whom she will not collude. In the following paragraphs I will show that Wroth's rejection of hope, like Greville's, is particularly Neo-stoic in tone. By examining P63, I will argue that Wroth depicts hope as – in Lipsian terms – 'opinion' that must be burned away to attain constancy.

P63 is a particularly striking depiction of a constantly changing world. In *On Constancy* Lipsius emphasises that the world is ever changing, and that the individual's constancy is a counterpoint to 'this casual and

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<sup>47</sup> Greville, "A Letter to an Honourable Lady", p. 156.

<sup>48</sup> See sonnets P18, P31, P37, P40.

inconstant variableness of all things'.<sup>49</sup> As I have argued in Chapter 4, in the *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* sequence Wroth presents Pamphilia as a constant point in the midst of change: the poems move in an almost alternate pattern between light and dark, day and night, figuring the speakers' changing emotional experience. In P63 the physical world and Fortune are characterised as equally changeable:

In night yet may we see some kinde of light,  
When as the Moone doth please to shew her face,  
And in the Sunns roome yeelds her light, and grace  
Which otherwise must suffer dullest night:

So are my fortunes barrd from true delight,  
Cold, and uncertaine, like to this strange place,  
Decreasing, changing in an instant space,  
And even at full of joy turnd to despight.

Justly on Fortune was bestowd the Wheele,  
Whose favours fickle, and unconstant reele,  
Drunke with delight of change and sudden paine;

Where pleasure hath no settled place of stay,  
But turning still, for our best hopes decay,  
And this (alas) we lovers often gaine.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Lipsius, *On Constancy*, p. 62.

<sup>50</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P63, pp. 242-243.

Wroth's image of the moon is striking as it changes from a lady of the courtly love tradition deigning to show her face, to an unreliable cosmic body, 'Decreasing, changing in an instant space'. The moon, Pamphilia's 'fortunes', and her immediate surroundings, 'this strange place', are all likened to one another. The place referred to may be the moon, Pamphilia's immediate surroundings, or, considering the progression of the sonnet, from the round of the moon to that of the wheel of fortune, 'this strange place' may be a third circle: the globe. The world then, is changeable as the moon. Not only do day and night change place, but night itself is not a certain quantity, as it is cyclically illuminated by the waxing and waning presence of the moon. Likewise, the space occupied by Pamphilia is 'changing in an instant space' because although she has not moved (or a movement is not indicated in the poetry) the place or situation she inhabits is now 'strange', meaning either foreign or unfamiliar because her fortunes have changed, so it is as if she has.<sup>51</sup> This is an unnerving description of an unfixed world. The 'cold' and 'strange' opening of the poem, and the night-time stillness it evokes, then plunges into a nightmarish whirl. Fortune is 'drunk with delight of change', making her 'fickle, and unconstant'. The description of fortune is a form of hypallage, as it also describes the effects of fortune: 'Drunk with delight of change, and sudden pain' is a wonderful description of exhilarating highs and lows produced by good and bad fortune. However, 'drunk' implies the condemnation of those who foolishly trust themselves to Fortune. Wroth's condemnatory language here can be compared to Greville's characterisation

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<sup>51</sup> I understand 'instant' here to mean in the same place and in the same time, "instant, n." *OED Online*, June 2019; "strange, adj.", *OED Online*, September 2016.

of the endlessly changeable husband in his *Letter*. The husband is characterised by ‘change of delights, and delight in change’.<sup>52</sup> Just as Greville urges the lady to stand apart from this changefulness, Wroth’s speaker resolves to stand aloof as Fortune’s wheel continues to turn, and ‘pleasure’ gives way to the decaying of hope (‘our best hopes decay’). Hope is characterised as part of this unattractive whirl of Fortune and Pamphillia reflects that hope’s decay is the usual ‘gaine’ for lovers. The ironic note of line 14 – ‘And this (alas) we lovers often gaine’ – returns the poem to its quiet contemplative opening tone. Pamphilia at once regrets the decaying of her hopes, but also acknowledges it as a gain. The use of ‘we’ in both the first and the last line gives the sense that the speaker is communicating a universal truth. This detached, knowing calm contrasts with the frenzy of Fortune. This equilibrium is only achieved once hope is ‘decayed’.

We have seen Pamphilia’s rejection of hope. However, in Wroth’s narrative, it is not despair that replaces hope, but constancy. During the sequence Pamphilia experiences low moments of darkness and sadness, in which she is presented as despairing or close to it. However, as I have argued in Chapter 3, this is not Pamphilia’s usual state and these moments of extreme grief are often followed by a rejection of that state.<sup>53</sup> The following pages will examine three sonnets (P68, P37, and P10) in which Wroth treats despair. In P68 Pamphilia rejects despair in a manner similar to the Neo-stoic terms that Greville deploys in his *Letter to an Honourable Lady*.

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<sup>52</sup> Greville, “Letter to an Honourable Lady”, p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> P21 is discussed in Chapter 3. In this light-hearted poem the speaker rejects complaint, despair, and the idea of dying for love as idle.



Sonnet P68 is one of the moments in Wroth's sequence in which Pamphilia comes close to succumbing to despair, but she is sustained by 'Faith' in 'Love'. The sonnet demonstrates the influence of Neo-stoic thinking as struggle and 'striv[ing]' lead to more trouble. Drawing on similar imagery to Greville – quoted above – Wroth presents the struggler as a ship:

Like to a Ship on *Goodwins* cast by winde,  
The more shee strive, more deepe in Sand is prest,  
Till she be lost: so am I in this kind  
Sunck, and devour'd, and swallow'd by unrest.

Lost, shipwrackt, spoyld, debar'd of smallest hope,  
Nothing of pleasure left, save thoughts have scope  
Which wander may; goe then my thoughts and cry:

Hope's perish'd, Love tempest-beaten, Joy lost,  
Killing Despaire hath all these blessings crost;  
Yet Faith still cries, Love will not falsifie. (Lines 5-14)<sup>54</sup>

The image of the ship is also common to Lipsius' *On Constancy*, where the ship – carefully steered or otherwise – and shipwrecks are recurring images. In his address to the reader Lipsius presents the well-ordered mind as a ship that can avoid 'quick sands' and attain a mind that enjoys equilibrium: 'But my Mind was other-wise; who always steering my Ship, from these quick

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<sup>54</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P68, pp. 245-246.

sands of subtilties, have directed all my endeavours to attain that one Haven of a peace-able and quiet mind.’<sup>55</sup> Greville’s advice to his honourable lady is similar to Lipsius’: to steer the mind’s ship carefully. Pamphilia’s ship, by contrast, has already been blown off course ‘by winde’ and has become lodged in quicksand. The more the ship attempts to escape the ‘more deepe in Sand is prest’ (line 6). The resolution of this simile reveals that the striving is mental: ‘so am I in this kind / Sunck, and devour’d, and swallow’d by unrest.’ Pamphilia’s extreme state of mental ‘unrest’ is emphasised by the tricolon and polysyndeton, which creates a sense of the overwhelming and cumulative nature of this ‘unrest’. The ‘unrest’ is compared simultaneously to the sand of the previous simile (in which Pamphilia is ‘sunck’), and to some rapacious creature or person who will ‘devour’ and ‘swallow’ the speaker. This extreme state of mind is a far cry from the ‘peace-able and quiet mind’ that Lipsius describes. Josephine Roberts has noted the shipwreck as a Petrarchan trope, and Robert Sidney’s use of similar imagery in his sonnets 22 and 23.<sup>56</sup> The shared imagery between Lipsius, Greville, Robert Sidney and Wroth is suggestive of the influence of Neo-stoic thinking on Wroth’s work.<sup>57</sup> Pamphilia’s emotional state leaves her ‘Lost, shipwrackt, spoyld, debar’d of smallest hope, / Nothing of pleasure left’ and this absence of hope

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<sup>55</sup> Lipsius, *On Constancy*, p. 29.

<sup>56</sup> Roberts, p. 122n.

<sup>57</sup> Similarities between Wroth’s image of the ship stuck in sands in P68 and Robert Sidney’s beached ship may suggest imitation. Such imitation would not preclude evidence of a Neo-stoic influence, as Robert Sidney’s interest in Neo-stoicism is well-documented. For Robert Sidney’s interest in Lipsius, see McCrea, p. 32. It is important to note that the shipwreck was also a common image in Petrarchan poetry and examples can be found in the work of Petrarch, Wyatt, and Sidney amongst others. The generic popularity of this image (and the others I mention in this chapter) make it difficult to differentiate a Neo-stoic influence on Wroth’s work from a Petrarchan influence. However, the crossover is also indicative of why adopting the outdated Petrarchan mode appealed to Wroth. For the shipwreck as a Petrarchan image, see Aurélie Griffin, “The Shipwrecked Soul in Elizabethan England: Crossing Motifs from Petrarch to Lady Mary Wroth”, *Shakespeare en Devenir – Les Cahiers de La Licorne*, 11 (Published online, 2016).

does lead the speaker to 'Despaire' (line 13). Wroth leaves her speaker in this extreme and dangerous position until the final line of the sonnet when Pamphilia is finally given a reprieve from despair. The sonnet ends: 'Yet Faith still cries, Love will not falsifie'. Despair is not replaced by the previously eradicated hope, but by faith in Love. The end of the sonnet is rendered unexpected by the power given to despair. In line 13 'Despaire' is given the epithet 'Killing' – emphatically placed at the start of the line – and the appearance of the word is preceded by another tricolon: 'Hope's perish'd, Love tempest-beaten, Joy lost' (line 12).<sup>58</sup> The two tricolons, which together create an overwhelming sense of sense of sinking into despair in the sonnet, both mention the loss of hope. The reader is invited to expect that despair will carry the day, but instead Wroth disrupts this expectation, presenting faith in love as the alternative.

While some songs and sonnets depict Pamphilia as an exemplar of constancy, and many more depict her striving for that constancy (including P37 and P68, discussed above), many depict the speaker in the throes of an extreme passion that she will not seek to reject until the following or a later sonnet. P10 is one such example. The trajectory of P10 is almost the reverse of P68. Sonnet P10 begins with an illusion of acceptance before revealing this feigned acceptance to be despair. The balanced question-and-answer structure of the first quatrain emphasises Pamphilia's supposed equanimity:

Bee you all pleas'd, your pleasures grieve not me;

Doe you delight? I envy not your joy:

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<sup>58</sup> I read this as: 'Hope is perish'd, Love is tempest-beaten, Joy is lost' (line 12). I believe the apostrophe in 'hope's' supports this reading.

Have you content? contentment with you be;

Hope you for blisse? hope still, and still enjoy. (Lines 1-4)<sup>59</sup>

The sonnet addresses 'you all', suggesting multiple listeners. The repeated rhetorical questions and the repetition of 'you' also suggests a formal address, in contrast to the introspection of the previous sonnet (P9). Yet this apparently more public opening to the sonnet returns to a reflection on the speaker's own suffering in line 5. Pamphilia's wishes for the group she addresses only serve to emphasise that she has no such pleasures. The happiness of the addressees in the opening four lines serves as a contrast to Pamphilia's own unfortunate state, and the pleasures of the many serve to emphasise the singularity of her suffering. As the sonnet continues Pamphilia not only succumbs to despair, but embraces it. At the start of the second quatrain the language is permissive: 'Let sad misfortune, haplesse me destroy, / Leave crosses to rule me' (lines 5-6), but as the sonnet continues this acceptance becomes a perverse desire for suffering under the governance of despair:

Joyes are bereav'd me, harmes doe only tarry,

Despaire takes place, disdaine hath got the hand:

Yet firme love holds my senses in such band,

As (since despised) I with sorrow marry.

Then if with grieve I now must coupled bee,

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<sup>59</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P10, p. 211.

Sorrow Ile wed; Despaire thus governess mee. (Lines 9-14)

In this sonnet I see justification for arguments like that of Susan Lauffer O'Hara that Wroth's poetry is expressive of a masochistic impulse. O'Hara does not address P10 in her book, but her reading of P32 could be applied here: 'it is Wroth's incessant, aggressive use of sadomasochism in this sequence that satirises Neoplatonic courtly love conventions. [...] Wroth [...] holds up the figure of Grief as an allegorical representation of sadomasochism'.<sup>60</sup> If 'Grief' were replaced with 'Sorrow' O'Hara might easily be describing P10. While I believe O'Hara attributes too much sexuality to the poems, there is indeed a sense of satire in the extreme way Pamphilia embraces suffering in this sonnet. The 'firme [...] hold[...]' that love has over the speaker leads her to attach herself to a new object, that is 'sorrow', because she is 'despised' by the original object. This displaced attachment is proposed as a default position ('since despised') in lines 11-12 but becomes an intention in the final line: 'Sorrow Ile wed'. In this way Wroth presents Pamphilia as seeking out this warped version of marriage. This perverse wedding happens under the aegis of 'Despaire' (line 14). The marriage imagery and the use of the word 'governess' invites the reader to read the sonnet politically. Pamphilia's masochism can be read as a satire on the willingness of the aristocracy not only to submit to, but to seek out and enjoy the oppression of an absolutist tyrant.<sup>61</sup> However, it is important to note that

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<sup>60</sup> Susan Lauffer O'Hara, *The Theatricality of Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), p. 79; see also see Gary Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 203-205.

<sup>61</sup> Melissa E. Sanchez argues that *Urania* is a satire on the discourse of constancy: 'In Wroth's hands political martyrdom – submission to the punishment of an unjust ruler – fails to function as effective protest. Instead it becomes a form of political masochism in which

while Pamphilia weds sorrow and is governed by despair in this sonnet, this is by no means characteristic of the rest of the sequence.

Viewed in the context of the wider sequence, sonnet P10 represents one of several extreme low points, from which Pamphilia ascends. The following songs and sonnets see Pamphilia moving away from, and then rejecting, this state of despair. P10 is followed immediately by the relief and delight of P11, but this is another extreme. In P11 ‘hope in pleasure swimmes’ (line 10).<sup>62</sup> A listless alteration between day and night, and hope and despair continues through P12 and P13. The following song, P14, continues this oscillation between extremes, before rejecting both to achieve constancy. The song encapsulates the alterations and inversions of the preceding sonnets and provides a form of summary as it moves through and rejects extremes towards a state of equanimity. The alternation between day and night – ‘All Night I weepe, all Day I cry, Ay me,’ (line 1) – is followed by a description of the tortures of hope, for which Wroth employs some neat – and typically Petrarchan – inversions to express Pamphilia’s conflict: ‘In coldest hopes I freeze, yet burne, ay me, / From flames I strive to flye, yet turne, ay me:’ (lines 5-6). Hope takes Pamphilia to the extremes of freezing and burning and far from the state propounded by Lipsius in *On Constancy* and Greville in his *Letter*. Later in the poem Pamphilia seeks to eschew these extremes:

From contraries I seeke to run, ay me,

But contraries I cannot shun, ay me:

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subjects come to enjoy pain and to love the person inflicting it’: Sanchez, *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 118.

<sup>62</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P11, pp. 211-212.

For they delight their force to trye,  
And to Despaire my thoughts doe tye, ay me. (Lines 9-12)<sup>63</sup>

The extremes of hope, that is the 'contraries' from which Pamphilia 'seeke[s] to run' but 'cannot shun', lead her to despair. Hope, in effect, 'tye[s]' Pamphilia's thoughts to despair. In this way, hope and despair are depicted as two interlinked dangers. Love, in the form of Cupid looks for respite in the 'Forrest' and in 'the Court', but both are rejected (lines 15 and 17). Ultimately the only 'quiet rest' can be found in the 'constant' self. The song ends:

Then quiet rest, and no more prove, ay me,  
All places are alike to Love, ay me:  
And constant be in this begun,  
Yet say, till Life with Love be done, Ay me. (Lines 21-24)

At the close of the poem Wroth's speaker resolves that the answer is to 'constant be' and to persevere. This ending has a tone of resolution and acceptance, but not of despair or suicide. 'Life' cannot be sacrificed until 'Love be done'. The song dramatises Pamphilia's rejection of hope and despair, and her struggle for constancy of mind. The song, therefore, intimates that, in Lipsian fashion, this struggle is one that results in endurance.

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<sup>63</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P14, pp. 213-214.

#### 5.4 Female Heroism: Sidney and Wroth

In this chapter so far, I have argued that Wroth engaged with contemporary Neo-stoic thought.<sup>64</sup> However, the difficulty in doing so is that much of the imagery associated with Neo-stoicism is also commonplace in Petrarchan poetry and in Calvinist discourses. It is therefore difficult to identify a clear Neo-stoic influence on Wroth's work. However, I argue that the presentation of female heroism in the *Urania* primes the reader to read the sonnets as part of a Neo-stoic tradition. It is therefore important to look at how this dynamic is established in the printed romance that preceded the sonnet sequence. As I noted in my reading of P10, Neo-stoic imagery was often employed alongside the allegory of marriage to comment on the nature of governance. As in Greville's *Letter to an Honourable Lady*, the persecuted wife could be read as analogous to the subject under tyranny. In this section I will argue that Wroth's *Urania* enters into this discourse in a particularly Lipsian manner. Before I do so, I will briefly set out the relationship between women and Neo-stoicism in the work of Lipsius, Mary Sidney, and then Philip Sidney. Next, I will examine the story of Limena in Wroth's *Urania* to argue that Wroth's conception of female heroism fits the Lipsian paradigm due to its active elements. Finally, I will consider the peculiarity of the figure of Pamphilia in this discourse as a monarch, rather than a subject.

Wroth's presentation of her heroine, Pamphilia, as the embodiment of constancy is in some ways at odds with Lipsius' writing, because Pamphilia is female. In Book II Chapter 3 of the *Politica* Lipsius states that 'it is evident

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<sup>64</sup> For Neo-stoic discourses in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, see Heather Dubrow, *Echoes of Desire: English Petrarchanism and its Counterdiscourses* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 153; Rosalind Smith, *Sonnets and the English Woman Writer, 1560-1621: The Politics of Absence* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 102.



that God our creator gave women [...] a heart full of deceit but denied them strength. Nor did he give them constancy: No woman maintains her moral weight for long at end.’<sup>65</sup> Marion Sperberg-McQueen points out that in the garden retreat where constancy is discussed in *On Constancy*, Lipsius seems to create a second Eden, free from women; and argues that Neo-Stoicism more generally is ‘profoundly troubling to the feminist reader both because of its misogyny and because of its subtle pervasiveness’.<sup>66</sup> She argues that Lipsius’ philosophy has no place for women because the virtues traditionally associated with women have been filled by men. In Lipsius’ writing good qualities are all gendered male, while the bad are gendered female precisely because in many ways, in following Lipsius’ exhortations, ‘the male Stoic himself has assumed the wifely role of Griselda’.<sup>67</sup> Indeed the qualities of a virtuous Neo-stoic – acceptance, patience, and a humble understanding of God’s inevitable power (as God replaces Fate for Neo-stoics) – are all acceptable and laudable qualities for early modern women.<sup>68</sup> Rather than being excluded from Lipsius’ garden by its author’s run-of-the-mill misogyny, early modern women who were defiant or politically engaged found Neo-stoicism a useful philosophy.<sup>69</sup>

Mary Sidney, Wroth’s direct precursor as a politically engaged female writer, drew on Neo-stoic writing not only for its political resonance as

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<sup>65</sup> Lipsius, *Politica*, p. 301.

<sup>66</sup> Marion R. Sperberg-McQueen, “Gardening Without Eve: The Role of Women in Justus Lipsius’ *De Constantia* and in Neo-Stoic Thought”, *The German Quarterly*, 68, 4 (1995), pp. 389-391.

<sup>67</sup> Sperberg-McQueen, p. 396.

<sup>68</sup> ‘Like Foxe, writers from Sidney to Milton encourage both male and female readers to see feminine suffering and sacrifice as more effective forms of political resistance than armed opposition.’ Sanchez, pp. 26-27.

<sup>69</sup> Anderson discusses the ways in which women in the seventeenth century used Neo-stoicism to consider their own positions. She suggests that Anne Clifford uses Lipsius’ Neo-stoic image of a river to preserve her own identity through ‘neo-stoic retirement’: Anderson, p. 163.

inherently suggesting support for the Protestant cause, but also to authorise her own position as a woman writer.<sup>70</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb argues that Mary Sidney's selection of translations 'suggest an interest in the art of dying'.<sup>71</sup> Contrary to Denny's claims that pious Mary Sidney only translated religious works, she also translated Petrarch's *Triumph of Death*, de Plessis Mornay's *Discourse of Life and Death*, and Garnier's *Tragedy of Antonius*.<sup>72</sup> Mornay's *Discourse of Life and Death* engages in a Christianised Stoicism, while Garnier's play (and *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* which Samuel Daniel wrote at Mary Sidney's behest) transforms Antony and Cleopatra into exemplars of dying well. Lamb explains that this 'heroics of constancy' was a sort of heroism available and appropriate to early modern women and that Stoicism was particularly appealing to women because its emphasis on being reconciled to death and suffering 'was consonant with other models in the Renaissance that recommended silence and obedience in the face of adversity as praiseworthy female behavior.'<sup>73</sup> Furthermore, Mary Sidney's interest in the ultimate Stoic act of dying well goes some way to mitigate the early modern perception of implicit sexuality in a woman's writing. Mary Sidney's depiction of her own willingness to die removes the taint of sexual promiscuity from her communicative freedom.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> For the connections between Protestant politics and Neo-stoicism see section 5.2.

<sup>71</sup> Mary Ellen Lamb, *Gender and Authorship in the Sidney Circle* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), p. 115.

<sup>72</sup> Denny, 1983, p. 239.

<sup>73</sup> Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, pp. 115, 119.

<sup>74</sup> Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, p. 120. For death as an authorising strategy for women writers, see Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (London: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 285-286.

While undoubtedly influenced by her aunt, the most unexpected model for the Neo-stoic woman was provided by Wroth's uncle.<sup>75</sup> Whatever Sidney's impact on Lipsius' Neo-stoicism might have been, critics have also identified elements of this philosophy in Sidney's own work. Lamb reads book 3 of the *Arcadia* as a platform for Sidney's depiction of heroic femininity in a Stoic mould. Philoclea and Pamela withstand temptation, heresy, violence, and threats of death, and even threats of each other's deaths, all with great sweetness. Their resistance and constancy is, Lamb argues, reminiscent of a Stoic resignation to death.<sup>76</sup> The Stoic heroism displayed by Pamela and Philoclea in this episode represents a sort of heroism that was suitable and available to women. Lamb suggests that the sufferings of the two princesses under Cecropia might be seen as 'an attempt to suggest a form of heroism appropriate for young women who are under pressure to marry'.<sup>77</sup> Lamb suggests that Sidney's creations might provide a fantasy of resistance for women readers who themselves are coerced or oppressed, or indeed a way of viewing their own resistance as heroic.<sup>78</sup> However, Julie Crawford reads the heroism of Pamela and Philoclea as symbolic of political rather than domestic resistance.<sup>79</sup> Early modern readers of the *Arcadia*, Crawford argues, would have read the constant heroines of the *Arcadia* as both emblems of political defiance, and ciphers for real world women who played intensely important political roles. Gender politics of the

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<sup>75</sup> Roland Greene argues that in the *New Arcadia* Sidney considers the complex question of what resistance might mean: "Resistance", *Five Words: Critical Semantics in the Age of Shakespeare and Cervantes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp. 90-91.

<sup>76</sup> Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, pp. 102-109.

<sup>77</sup> Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, p. 109.

<sup>78</sup> Lamb, *Gender and Authorship*, p. 109-111.

<sup>79</sup> Julie Crawford, *Mediatrix: Women, Politics, and Literary Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), pp. 30-71.

period, that made a woman's relationship with her father or husband analogous to that of a subject to a monarch, meant that, in literature, a woman's response to tyranny would easily have been read as analogous to a subject's response to a tyrannical sovereign.<sup>80</sup> Rather than providing an exemplar for the persecuted daughter or wife, Pamela and Philoclea provide a model for the good subject to follow.

Importantly, Crawford also points out an illustration of how the subject can teach the sovereign. When Cecropia urges Amphialus to rape Philoclea 'prince Amphialus learns a crucial lesson not only in Neo-stoic constancy but in political governance as well.'<sup>81</sup> While Amphialus is not the ruler in this scenario (Cecropia is) as a man and potential rapist he is in the allegorical position of king and potential tyrant to the woman-subject. Though urged by his mother that rape would be the natural course of action to take, Amphialus finds himself subject to Philoclea's virtue. Amphialus refuses to follow his mother's advice saying that he is 'captive' to the 'majesty of virtue'.<sup>82</sup> Lipsius' advice to subjects in *On Constancy* is to take an active role in world affairs alongside the cultivation of a constant mind. Philoclea achieves this constancy in her resignation, and activity in her influence on Amphialus. In his *Politica* Lipsius urges monarchs to rule through consensus, to be guided by good counsel, and to value poets. Amphialus is guided and improves. Cecropia, the tyrant who will not be instructed by her subjects' virtue, dies.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Crawford, p. 38.

<sup>81</sup> Crawford, p. 69.

<sup>82</sup> Crawford, p. 69.

<sup>83</sup> Crawford, p. 71.

Whether Sidney inspired Lipsius, as McCrea argues, or Lipsius' writing influenced Sidney's reworking of his *Arcadia*, as Crawford suggests, or whether the congruence between their work was produced by a sense of zeitgeist and common influences, the association between Sidney and Lipsius, and the intriguing parallels in their work, encouraged Sidney's literary and political heirs to adopt a particularly Lipsian, Neo-stoic stance.<sup>84</sup> Wroth's depiction of female heroism is clearly modelled after Sidney's in her Lipsian approach to Neo-stoicism. The virtuous women in Wroth are eloquent, constant, resigned to their fates, but at the same time active in their influence, as I will demonstrate through the example of Limena. Scholars have argued that Wroth's *Urania* critiqued the personal rule of James I through her depiction of good women who are married to, or are the daughters of, tyrannical men.<sup>85</sup> Here I suggest that Wroth engages specifically with this Lipsian paradigm of inner constancy and outer influence.

In book I of *Urania* Limena is married against her will to a man she does not love. She loves another man. Limena cooperates with the marriage, but in her heart remains faithful to her true love. Perissus narrates her leaving her parents' house:

That night I saw her, and but spake to her, so curiously her husband  
watched us, yet he could not keepe our eies, but by them we did

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<sup>84</sup> Crawford, pp. 51-52; McCrea, p. 33.

<sup>85</sup> Sanchez argues the opposite; she argues that Wroth satirises this ineffective form of protest and presents Urania's character as representing an important counter narrative that urges action and resistance: Sanchez, pp. 117-128. For scholars who have read the resilience of Wroth's wives and women as emblems of a form of Stoic resistance, see Elaine Beilin, "Winning 'the harts of the people'", *Pilgrimage For Love: Essays in Early Modern Literature in Honour of Josephine A. Roberts*, pp. 1-17, 9-10; Crawford, pp. 179-188.

deliver our soules, he onely able to keepe her daintie body in his wicked prison.

The next day they went, and so went all worth with this odd man to have her delicacy kept like a Diamond in a rotten box; yet she considering it to be to no purpose to contend, where she was miserably bound to obey, observed him, as well as she could bring her spirit to consent to.<sup>86</sup>

While her husband is in possession of her 'daintie body' her 'soule' remains with Perissus. While Limena behaves acquiescently (she 'obey[s]' and 'observe[s]' him), she maintains a resistance against her husband Philargus, as she remains faithful to her love for Perissus. Wroth's description of Limena as a diamond hints at her heroic constancy to come, as the diamond is hard as well as pure and beautiful. As Philargus' cruelty to Limena escalates, her outside begins to change, but of course her insides remain unmoved: 'shee grew sad, and keeping much within, grew pale, her rosie cheekes and lippes changing to wannesse: but this was all the change, her noble heart free from such a sinne.'<sup>87</sup> While Limena is sad, her love for Perissus remains constant. Even when Philargus embarks on a ritual torture of his wife, leading up to her intended death, Limena's inner constancy is contrasted with physical changes. Helen Hackett draws attention to the

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<sup>86</sup> *The First Part of The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. by Josephine Roberts (Binghampton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1995), p. 8; *The Early Modern Englishwoman: Mary Wroth*, Part 1, Volume 10 (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), p. 7.

<sup>87</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, pp. 8-9; Scolar Press Facsimile, pp. 7-8.

external-internal contrast highlighted by Wroth in her treatment of Limena's torture, as Limena's marked body is juxtaposed with her spotless soul.<sup>88</sup>

What is most Lipsian, and indeed Sidneian, is the power of Limena's example in her suffering to transform others. Like Philoclea's subjugation of Amphialus, Limena's fortitude converts Philargus to a realisation of her innocence, and he welcomes death:

"First" said hee, "let mee know by whose hand I have received this  
worthie end, and indeed, too worthy for so worthlesse a Creature, who  
now, and but now, could discerne my rash, and wicked error: which  
now I most heartily repent. Now are mine eyes open to the injuries  
done to vertuous Limena, her chastity appeares before my dying sight,  
whereto before, my eyes were dimme, and eares deafe, seeing and  
hearing nothing, but base falshoods, being govern'd by so strong and  
undeserved Jealousie."<sup>89</sup>

Limena's constancy and her Stoic willingness to die provoke emulation. Philargus mirrors Limena in a Stoic welcoming of death as he acknowledges that he has allowed his affections to rule him. Limena's tale both offers a model for the subject under tyranny, and suggests the transformative power of an exemplar of constancy.

Limena, as a daughter, wife, and woman, occupies all the positions analogous to subjecthood. Linda Dove has argued that the sonnet sequence,

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<sup>88</sup> Helen Hackett, *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 169.

<sup>89</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p.85; Scholar Press Facsimile, pp. 69-70.

like Limena's story, can be read as an exploration of politics. She argues that the rejected Pamphilia represents the 'beleaguered populace bound to absolute rule'.<sup>90</sup> In many ways this is congruent with the Petrarchan sonneteer whose subjection to the cruel beloved has been read as implicitly political.<sup>91</sup> However, in the romance Pamphilia is not a subject, but a monarch. If the sonnets are voiced by a sovereign, this casts a different light on Wroth's engagement with political theory. Instead of a subject whose example of constancy will influence the monarch, Pamphilia represents an exemplary monarch, to whose constancy others should aspire. Pamphilia's sovereignty renders Wroth's message to James I somewhat more direct. What's more, Pamphilia is not just any queen. As Beilin, Smith, and others have noted, Pamphilia bears a striking resemblance to Elizabeth I.<sup>92</sup> In this way Wroth's women register not only resistance to James I's absolute rule, but also nostalgia for an Elizabethan Golden Age.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Linda L. Dove, "Mary Wroth and the Politics of the Household in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, ed. by Mary Burke, Jane Donawerth, Linda Dove, and Karen Nelson (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. 143.

<sup>91</sup> Sanchez, p. 16. Natasha Distiller, *Desire and Gender in the Sonnet Tradition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 52.

<sup>92</sup> For Pamphilia's resemblance to Elizabeth I designed to provoke nostalgia, see Beilin, *Redeeming Eve*, p. 219; William J. Kennedy, *The Site of Petrarchism: Early Modern National Sentiment in Italy, France, and England* (London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), p. 235; Rosalind Smith, p. 95.

<sup>93</sup> For Jacobean political dissatisfaction as expressed by Elizabethan nostalgia, see Paul Salzman, *Literary Culture in Jacobean England: Reading 1621* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 130-131; John Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 16-17, 26, 34. For 'Spenserian' literature that evoked nostalgia for an Elizabethan 'Golden Age' as political commentary, see David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 176.



## 6. Pembroke, Politics, and Coterie Poetry

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter, like its predecessor, continues to look at contemporary influences on Wroth's work, rather than authorities referenced by Wroth. This chapter centres on Wroth's connection to William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke, and will argue that the topics discussed in the work of these two poets suggest that they were both influenced by shared coterie activity, and that they were working in the same political and literary milieu. I refer to William Herbert as Pembroke throughout the chapter. I will begin with a brief description of Pembroke and his relationship to Wroth, and then turn to the current state of literature on Herbert's poetry. I will argue that Herbert was a social poet whose work was circulated in manuscript to a courtly audience, and that the love themes in his poems are indicative of coterie activity rather than intimate love messages to an individual. As part of this argument I will respond in detail to Garth Bond's argument that Wroth's manuscript poem "Penshurst Mount" is a response to Pembroke's poem "Why with unkindest swiftness dost thou turn". I will argue that the story of "Penshurst Mount" is one that demonstrates the remarkable flexibility of Wroth's poems, and shows how they were deployed in different contexts for different effects. I will also argue that the themes shared in the work of Wroth and Pembroke are indicative of their shared political agenda to promote an interventionist, Protestant political policy.

## 6.2 Pembroke's Politics

In order to provide some political context for the sonnet sequence, I will begin with a summary of current affairs. Mary Wroth had two illegitimate children in 1624 with her cousin William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke, and the son of Mary Sidney Herbert. Pembroke was also a close ally of Wroth's father, Robert Sidney, and the political and personal interests of the Sidney and Herbert families were closely bound together. Pembroke was an important political figure and he served as Lord Chamberlain from 1615 and then Lord Controller from 1627 until his death in 1630.<sup>1</sup> Alongside these offices Pembroke built up considerable power in parliament and as a literary patron.<sup>2</sup> Despite these endeavours Pembroke was often thwarted by James I's preference for his favourites. Pembroke found more rewards in the court of Queen Anne, who gathered about her many figures who had once been associated with the Essex circle.<sup>3</sup> Robert Sidney, Wroth's father and Pembroke's ally, acted as Queen Anne's Lord Chamberlain from 1612 until her death in 1619.<sup>4</sup> Those looking forward to James VI of Scotland's probable succession as James I of England had hoped that his policies might satisfy their frustrated political wishes and ambitions. It was hoped that he, as his literary endeavours suggested, might be a more decidedly Protestant

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<sup>1</sup> For details of Pembroke's career and struggles against the favourites of James I, see Brian O'Farrell, *Shakespeare's Patron: Politics, Patronage and Power* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011); for details of Pembroke's initial favour with James I, see Jonathan Bate, *The Soul of the Age*, p. 226; and O'Farrell, pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> For dedications to Pembroke from authors of anti-Spanish or anti-Catholic texts and his parliamentary power base, see Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 271, 273.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (London: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 23; for the oppositional politics of Anne's court – communicated through theatrical and literary means – see Lewalski, pp. 15-44.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Shephard, "The Life of Robert Sidney (1563-1626), First Earl of Leicester", *Ashgate Research Companion to the Sidneys, 1500-1700*, vol. 1, ed. by Margaret P. Hannay, Michael G. Brennan, Mary Ellen Lamb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 97.

monarch, and that he would pursue the idea of a Protestant league, as championed by Philip Sidney (Pembroke's uncle). James had even contributed to a volume of elegies produced by Cambridge University in praise of Sidney, provoking the expectation that 'his succession [might] usher in a new age in which those who admired Philip Sidney's political ideals and poetic achievement would be patronised by an enlightened king'.<sup>5</sup> In the event, James I's policies were ones of pacifism and developing alliances with countries like Catholic Spain. While there were some at court who welcomed this policy, such as the powerful Howard family, others such as the Sidney-Herbert families and their political allies were outraged by what was seen as a pro-Catholic agenda. This faction, to which Pembroke belonged, was very much against a Catholic alliance and wanted to pursue relationships with other Protestant powers in Europe.<sup>6</sup>

In 1621, the year that Wroth published her work, matters came to a head when James recalled parliament. Discussion at this parliament focussed on the situation of Elizabeth of Bohemia, James' daughter. As part of his plans for balanced peace-making, James, had married his daughter to a Protestant (she married Frederick V the Elector Palatine 1613 and Robert Sidney accompanied her to Heidelberg after the marriage). He then planned to marry his son to a Catholic.<sup>7</sup> In 1618 Bohemia refused the right of Ferdinand II, a Spanish Catholic, to be their king, and the crown was offered to Frederick, who accepted in 1619. By 1620 he and Elizabeth were ousted by Spanish forces. Pembroke was dedicated to aiding Elizabeth, and was one of

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<sup>5</sup> David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 174.

<sup>6</sup> O'Farrell, p. 45.

<sup>7</sup> Shephard, p. 98.

her major advisors, as is demonstrated by a letter from Pembroke, penned by his ally and parliamentary representative Benjamin Rudyerd. In 1620 Pembroke was one of seven English noblemen who donated £2000 apiece to Elizabeth and Frederick's campaign. He believed that James' 'honour', as 'Defender of the Faith' and as a relative of Elizabeth and Frederick, would force him to intervene, but the king did not see things so clearly.<sup>8</sup> On one side, Pembroke's faction urged James to intervene with military force in their aid, not only as James' daughter and son-in-law, but as fellow Protestants. Elizabeth of Bohemia was very popular with the public, so this argument bore much popular weight.<sup>9</sup> However, opposing Spain would endanger James' plans for peace and any future marriage between Prince Charles and the Infanta of Spain, so the pro-Spanish faction resisted appeals for intervention.<sup>10</sup> Parliament was called by James in 1621 'because he needed to raise enough money at least to be able to convince Spain that he might go to war on Frederick's behalf.'<sup>11</sup> For Pembroke and his allies, the debate had wider implications about their own freedom and role within government. This Protestant faction not only feared Spain's Catholic influence, but also the Habsburg practice of absolutist monarchy. Pembroke mustered his supporters in parliament to further the cause of Elizabeth of Bohemia; but more pertinent to the topic of this thesis, he recruited the beneficiaries of his literary patronage in support of his aims.<sup>12</sup> Both Pembroke's own poetry –

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<sup>8</sup> O'Farrell, p. 115.

<sup>9</sup> For Elizabeth of Bohemia's iconic role in Protestant interventionist politics, see Lewalski, pp. 45-66.

<sup>10</sup> David L. Smith, *A History of the Modern British Isles, 1603-1707: The Double Crown* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), pp. 51-58.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Salzman, *Literary Culture in Jacobean England: Reading 1621* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 45.

<sup>12</sup> For Pembroke's use of 'the machinery of patronage' to promote anti-Catholic sentiment, see Gary Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert, and the*

circulated in manuscript – and Wroth’s poetry – published in print in 1621 – engage with this debate. This engagement will become clearer when the work of both poets is viewed in conjunction.

### 6.3 Pembroke’s Poetry

Pembroke, like many of his courtly peers, also wrote poetry.<sup>13</sup> Pembroke engaged in coterie activity and his work was circulated in manuscript. His poems were popular additions to commonplace books and were also set to music.<sup>14</sup> Following his death John Donne the younger gathered together Pembroke’s poems in an edition printed in 1660. The 1660 edition is highly problematic because Donne’s edition was heavily supplemented with the work of others that he attributed to Pembroke.<sup>15</sup> However, Robert Krueger’s 1961 thesis has since established a reliable edition of Pembroke’s work.<sup>16</sup>

Mary Ellen Lamb states that due to the physical proximity of the two cousins (and lovers), and the intensely literary culture of their family, ‘there can be little doubt that Mary Wroth and William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, read and responded to each other’s poems.’<sup>17</sup> The close familial

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*Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 84-86.

<sup>13</sup> For a summary of scholarship on Pembroke’s poetry, see Mary Ellen Lamb, “The Poetry of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke”, *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Sidneys, 1500-1700, Vol. 2*, ed. by Margaret P. Hannay, Michael G. Brennan, Mary Ellen Lamb (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 269-279.

<sup>14</sup> Pembroke’s poetry survives in at least 50 commonplace books dating from between c.1610 to 1670 (Waller, pp. 165-166); for the musical context of Pembroke’s works see Lamb, “The Poetry of William Herbert”, p. 274.

<sup>15</sup> For an account of this edition see, Mary Ellen Lamb, “‘Can You Suspect a Change in Me?’: Poems by Mary Wroth and William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke”, *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson, Naomi J. Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 54; Robert Krueger, “Introduction to the Canon and Text of Pembroke’s Poems”, *The Poems of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke* (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1961), pp. xxvii-lx.

<sup>16</sup> *The Poems of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke* (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1961).

<sup>17</sup> Lamb, “Can You Suspect a Change in Me?”, p. 53.

and political ties of the Herbert-Sidney alliance were compounded by the intimate, sexual relationship between Wroth and her cousin (which must have at least begun nine months before the birth of their children in 1623).<sup>18</sup> While it is certain that Wroth spent a great deal of time at Pembroke's London residence (Baynard's Castle) and had a study there, and that their poetry indeed shares many themes – as I will explore later in this chapter – what the nature of this poetic dialogue might be is less clear.<sup>19</sup> Some critics have argued that poems of Pembroke and Wroth interact directly with one another and supply intimate details of their relationship.<sup>20</sup> I shall argue instead that the discourse between the two poets is indicative of shared coterie activity. Recent work on manuscript poetry that argues for the poems as erotic discourse also does much to prove the flexibility of the way that Wroth's poems were deployed in their different manuscript and print incarnations, which I will show later in section 6.4. The similarity between the work of Wroth and Pembroke identified by these scholars should be seen as evidence that the two poets were indeed interacting, but as part of a literary coterie. The thematic similarities between the work of the pair

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<sup>18</sup> This intimate association may have begun earlier. Many scholars have read the *de praesenti* marriage between Pamphilia and Amphilanthus in *Urania 2* as an admission of a similar relationship between Wroth and Pembroke.

<sup>19</sup> For Wroth's movements see Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), p. 184; Lamb, "Can You Suspect a Change in Me", pp. 54-55.

<sup>20</sup> For Philisses' song on love and reason in *Love's Victory* as a response to Pembroke and Rudyerd's answer poems on the subject, see Marion Wynne-Davies, "So Much Worth': Autobiographical Narratives in the Work of Lady Mary Wroth", *Betraying Our Selves: Forms of Self-Representation in Early Modern English Texts*, ed. by Henk Dragsta, Sheila Ottoway, Helen Wilcox (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), pp. 83-86; for an argument for Pembroke's "Can you suspect a change in me" as a response to Wroth's Song 1 (MS 7), see Ilona Bell, "'A too curious secrecie': Wroth's Pastoral Song and 'Urania'", *Sidney Journal*, 31, 1 (2013), pp. 23-50. For developments on Wynne-Davies' work on the bio-geography of Penshurst in Wroth's work and an argument for Wroth's 'Sweet Solitariness' (titled in one manuscript variant as "Penshurst Mount") as a response to Pembroke's poem: 'Why with unkind swiftness', see Garth Bond, "Amphilanthus to Pamphilia: William Herbert, Mary Wroth and Penshurst Mount", *Sidney Journal*, 31, 1 (2013), pp. 51-80; see also Lamb "The Poetry of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke" and "Can You Suspect a Change in Me?".

suggest a shared engagement in the communal activities that produced poetry, and that they were exposed to similar influences. In this section I shall argue that it is this kind of social interaction that makes up the dialogue (or indeed polylogue) of these poems.

Pembroke's poetry is indicative of the social and conversational nature of poetry in the early Stuart period.<sup>21</sup> Manuscript poetry was often produced by social interaction and prompted by specific occasions. Arthur Marotti emphasises the range of occasions that might provoke poetry:

Lyrics were written in an astonishing number of circumstances in the English Renaissance: these included imprisonment, New Year's gift-giving, correspondence, along with more conventional situations such as paying compliments and appealing for patronage. Poems were composed in response to themes set by others; they were designed to answer parodies of known texts; they were made to fit well-known tunes or to serve as responses to the challenge to extemporaneous composition; they were verses or riddles for social diversion [...]<sup>22</sup>

What is striking about Marotti's list is the social and interconnected nature of many of the occasions mentioned: many poems were 'responses', 'answers', 'parodies', and rebuttals. While poetry as courtiership and in courtship played a large part in the literary production of the period, there was also

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<sup>21</sup> For the dialectic or conversational nature of early modern lyric, see Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 159-171; Cathy Shrank, "Answer Poetry and Other Verse Conversations", *A Companion to Renaissance Poetry*, ed. by Catherine Bates (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2018), pp. 376-388.

<sup>22</sup> For the full list, see Marotti, *Manuscript, Print*, pp. 2-3

space for ‘challenges’, ‘riddles’ and ‘social diversion’.<sup>23</sup> Gary Waller has argued that Pembroke’s poetry is merely the stuff of social diversion, that he produced fashionable entertainment in a manner that bonded him with his peers.<sup>24</sup> Waller gives the example of Pembroke’s poem “Dear leave thy home and come with me” as a response to a coterie challenge. The poem is – like Raleigh’s “The Nymph’s Reply” and Donne’s “The Bait” – a response to Marlowe’s “Come live with me”. Pembroke’s response shows confidence and skill, but, Waller argues, lacks ‘ambiguity, tension, or urgent social voice’.<sup>25</sup> Waller suggests that Pembroke’s poems are trivial social ephemera that serve only to reveal the social dynamics of the period.

While Waller denies the individuality of Pembroke’s voice, in contrast Mary Ellen Lamb has argued that Pembroke’s references to claiming the virginity of the addressee of his poems represent a distinctive innovation and evidence of a specific occasion rather than a coterie challenge.<sup>26</sup>

Yet Pembroke’s work was not entirely derivative. His amatory poems responded to situations in sometimes startlingly specific ways. None of the poets Waller mentioned, for example, claim to have gained a

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<sup>23</sup> For love poetry as political, see Marotti’s seminal essay “‘Love is Not Love’: Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences and the Social Order”, *ELH*, 49.2 (1982), pp. 396-428; Bell has challenged the trend in scholarship to read love poetry as political, arguing for the role of poetry in the courtship practices of the period: see Bell, *Elizabethan Women and the Poetry of Courtship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> Gary Waller, *The Sidney Family Romance: Mary Wroth, William Herbert and the Early Modern Construction of Gender* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), pp. 165-169. Waller does see Pembroke’s poetry as valuable to scholars because it is ‘profoundly revealing of their writer’s gender and class assignments’ and considers their value as a contribution to our understanding of early modern, aristocratic masculinity (Waller, p. 179).

<sup>25</sup> Waller, pp. 167-169.

<sup>26</sup> Lamb also discusses “Dear leave thy home and come with me” – Pembroke’s variation on the ‘Come live with me’ theme – and provides evidence that he knew both Raleigh and Donne personally, Lamb, “The Poetry of William Herbert”, p. 275.



beloved's maidenhead, as does Pembroke in two poems ("Why with unkind swiftness" and "Muse get thee to a cell").<sup>27</sup>

On this matter, Waller's argument is more convincing than Lamb's. The detail of claiming the woman's virginity seems exactly like the sort of small innovation on a theme that coterie activity encouraged. However, surely there is no way for the modern critic to know whether a poem was composed to deliver a message to (or take revenge upon) a real-life beloved, or to give voice to a character or scenario to amuse a coterie audience. The dramatic narrative details in Pembroke's poem "Why with unkindest swiftness dost thou turn", such as the 'three days' journey' (line 27), the description of a specific garden (lines 8-10), and the speaker's boast that 'I was before them, and before me none' (line 76), add verisimilitude and the circumstantial details could refer to a situation taken from real life.<sup>28</sup> However, these details might also represent an exercise in *prosopopoeia*.<sup>29</sup> The accusations of falsehood the speaker makes against the addressee of the poem are generic: the addressee is represented as devious, changeable, weak, easily persuaded, and 'malicious as [sexually] incontinent' (line 65). These are all conventional charges laid against women in literature of the period. Pembroke imagines the inevitable progression from one lover to 'the multitude' (line 73) – drawing on the common trope that a woman who falls once becomes sexually available to all – and imagines her as leftover food ('my leavings' (line 74)).

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<sup>27</sup> Lamb, "The Poetry of William Herbert", p. 271; Lamb "Can You Suspect a Change in Me", pp. 58-59.

<sup>28</sup> Pembroke, pp. 49-51.

<sup>29</sup> Pembroke's generic rhetoric of misogyny is suitable to a character whose beloved has proved untrue and can be compared to the language of any number of dramatic figures, for example a parallel could be drawn with Posthumus' rants against Imogen (*Cymbeline*, 2.4-2.5) or Hamlet's against women in general.

For the modern reader, Pembroke's repetition of the charge that the woman is 'seeming' ('thou mad'st me such a seeming show' (line 3) and 'seemingly was mourned' (line 21) cannot help but recall Hamlet's misogyny. While I do not suggest that Pembroke is making a direct allusion to Shakespeare's work, a brief comparison here shows how Pembroke draws on generalist tropes of female deceit. In line 24 the speaker declares: 'But see the frailty of a woman's troth!' The failures of this unfaithful lover are inevitable as women in general are inherently frail. Shakespeare's 'Frailty thy name is woman!' makes a similar equation of individual misdeeds with the general evils of womanhood. Pembroke's 'scarce three days' (line 27) can also be likened to Hamlet's hyperbolic 'A little month!'.<sup>30</sup> Wroth's work does respond to the charge that women are changeable by presenting a constant woman, plagued by an inconstant man in both her printed 1621 works. However, it is difficult to argue that this was a response to Pembroke, since the inconstancy of women is such a widespread trope in early modern love lyric that Wroth must be seen as responding to the convention rather than any individual poet or circumstance.

What have been read as the potentially biographical details of Pembroke's poem should be seen instead as evidence of experimentation with a poetic conceit – typical of metaphysical poets of that period and later. The detail of the 'three days' journey' need not refer to a specific three-day absence but serves to emphasise the woman's 'unkindest swiftness':

Scarce had the sun (to many rooms assigned)

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<sup>30</sup> Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 1.2.146-147.

Been thrice within the changeful waves confined,  
And I scarce three days' journey from thine eyes  
When thou new love didst in thy heart devise,  
And gav'st the relics of thy virgin-head  
Upon the easiest prayers as could be said. (lines 25-30)

The repetition of 'scarce' emphasises that small number 'three' / 'thrice' (also repeated for emphasis). The image of the sun – 'to many rooms assigned' – indicates the inevitability of the speaker's return: just as the sun has many places he must visit but reliably comes back, so the unfaithful lover ought to have understood her lover's reliable return. In contrast 'the changeful waves' evoke the unfaithful woman. The image of the sun sinking into the waves, therefore, has sexual connotations. The choice of the number three is unlikely to represent a biographical detail because here it is embedded in and continues the religious imagery of the poem. While she was 'seeming' (line 3) faithful the addressee of the poem swore to remain faithful during his absence and 'Of this thou mad'st religion' (line 23). In the extract quoted above what is left of the woman's virtue is imagined as 'relics' given up in response to the 'easiest prayers as could be said'. The metaphor contrasts how the woman ought to have behaved with her actions: holy relics should be treasured and closely guarded. Later the woman is too 'weak[...]' to spot 'vice in angel's shape' (lines 32-34) and 'solace of a nun' (line 38) is not enough for her. The discourse of female weakness is framed in explicitly religious language. The three days fits neatly into this catalogue of ways in which the woman has proved faithless to the religion of their love. Three days recalls the time it took for Christ to return after his crucifixion. On the third day

Mary Magdalen, the reformed woman, finds Christ risen in the garden. In a subversion of this image the addressee of the poem seems to have vacated the garden in which they made their vows (described in lines 8-12), failed to wait for her lover, and become fallen on the third day. In this way the garden doubles as both a place of erotic freedom, but also as Eden, from which the woman has irrevocably fallen. This religious imagery in an erotic context may be indicative of the influence of Donne.

While Pembroke's poetry differs in style from Wroth's – his descriptions of love relationships are more narrative and direct than Wroth's Petrarchan sonnets, and his poetry also includes some metaphysical conceits (such as the conceit of the tempering of metal in "One Heart Made of Two") – there is an overlap with the language and imagery of Wroth's work.<sup>31</sup> Like Wroth's, many of Pembroke's poems are concerned with the theme of constancy. Lamb notes that "If her disdain least change in you can move", which is one of Pembroke's most widely copied poems, shares Wroth's depiction of constancy as a virtue independent of its object.<sup>32</sup> The theme of constancy also appears in "Can you suspect a change in me", which some scholars have argued is a response to Wroth's aubade (MS77, which does not appear in the 1621 printed edition).<sup>33</sup> However, scholars have identified the most connections with the series of answer poems that Pembroke and Rudyerd composed on a debate between love and reason. Philisses' song from Act 2 of *Love's Victory*, P86 from the *corona* of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, and P64 have all been convincingly shown to engage in the

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<sup>31</sup> Pembroke, pp. 37-39.

<sup>32</sup> Lamb, "Can You Suspect a Change in Me?", pp. 63-64.

<sup>33</sup> Lamb, "Can You Suspect a Change in Me?", pp. 53-54.

same debate that Rudyard and Pembroke's series of answer poems perform.<sup>34</sup> I will discuss Wroth's engagement with the Love and Reason debate later in this chapter (section 6.6). These similarities – and the literary culture of the time, in which manuscript circulation flourished – suggest that Wroth and Pembroke were both engaged in shared coterie activity.<sup>35</sup> It was not unusual for women to partake in these literary activities. The literary coterie that surrounded Wroth's cousin the Countess of Bedford included men, women, other aristocrats and professional poets whom the leading members of the group patronised. In her analysis of the Countess of Bedford's role as a courtier and patron of poetry Barbara Kiefer Lewalski has established connections between the Countess of Bedford, Pembroke, Daniel, Donne, Cecelia Bulstrode and Anne Clifford.<sup>36</sup> Louise Schleiner adds Lady Anne Southwell (and Sir Thomas Overbury, before his death) to this line-up, and – before describing their literary parlour games – tentatively suggests that Wroth may also have been involved in this coterie as her dates at court fit in with the other members of the group.<sup>37</sup> The known connections between Wroth and many identified members of this group and the chronology make Wroth's involvement here very likely. The ideas and discussions that we know the Countess of Bedford's coterie debated – such as the relative virtues of men and women – are similar to those discussed in Wroth's poetry and

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<sup>34</sup> Wynne-Davies, pp. 83-86; Katherine R. Larson, "Playing at Penshurst: The Songs and Musical Games of Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*", *Sidney Journal*, 34, 1 (2016), p. 98; Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010), p. 195; Lamb, "Can You Suspect a Change in Me?", pp. 55-57.

<sup>35</sup> For women's active involvement in manuscript circulation and other coterie activities during this period see Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), pp. 55-56.

<sup>36</sup> Lewalski, pp. 95-123.

<sup>37</sup> Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 107-108.

prose. If Wroth was not involved in this particular group, her work was inspired by similar activities with a different group.

#### 6.4 Penshurst Mount

Garth Bond's work on a lesser known Wroth manuscript provides an interesting argument in support of the notion that the dialogue between Wroth and Pembroke's poetry is communication about their intimate relationship.<sup>38</sup> Bond discusses a transcription of one of Wroth's poems by an unknown hand that is named (in this variant) as "Penshurst Mount" and argues that this poem is a response to Pembroke's "Why with unkindest swiftness dost thou turn", and proves that the 'leafy mound' (line 8) in Pembroke's poem is Penshurst Mount.<sup>39</sup> This section will argue that the manuscript poem "Penshurst Mount" is important as an example of how Wroth's poems were radically reworked and repurposed to communicate different things to different audiences. After outlining the key differences between the poems, I will argue that the connection Bond makes between Wroth's poem and Pembroke's is tenuous. Bond's argument relies on an identification between the mount in Wroth's poem and the mound in Pembroke's. I will show that the mount in Wroth's poem is inspired by her Ovidian source. As I examine the classical allusion in Wroth's poem I will also point out how the tone differs from Pembroke's and suggest an alternative reading. After contrasting the two versions of Wroth's poem I will

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<sup>38</sup> The text for Pembroke's poems will be taken from Robert Krueger's edition, which includes only poems securely attributable to Pembroke and Rudyard. "Why with unkindest swiftness dost thou turn", *The Poems of William Herbert, Third Earl of Pembroke*, ed. by Robert Krueger (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 1961) p. 49.

<sup>39</sup> Bond, pp. 51-80; Bond builds on the work of Wynne-Davies who explores the connection between Wroth's work and the geography of Penshurst: see Wynne-Davies, pp. 89-91.

briefly situate this type of reworking in the early modern culture of adapting and modifying poems for different occasions.

A variant of Wroth's poem appears in her 1621 romance. In this incarnation the poem is written by Dorolindus when he comes to a natural mount set about with black marble benches, which have been graffitied by lovers. This prompts Dorolindus to produce his own love poetry.<sup>40</sup> Dorolindus has been unfairly disinherited from his rightful throne in favour of his evil sister. His frustrated ambitions are paralleled by his defeats in love. His poetry persuades Amphilanthus that constancy is 'the onely perfect vertue'.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, in its manuscript variant, the poem – uncontextualized by prose – does not have a clear speaker. However, the title, "Penshurst Mount" invites an identification between the speaker and the author, and the inclusion of the image of Niobe suggests the speaker is female. The manuscript poem is in an unknown hand. Bond shows that the poem probably came to Edward, Viscount Conway – the owner of the miscellany in which it appears – from Wroth because the watermark on the paper is the same one that appears on a letter that Wroth sent to him asking for debt relief. The differences between the two versions – most notably, the inclusion of the figure of Niobe in the manuscript variant – significantly alter the tone of the poem, as I will demonstrate later in this section.

While the title "Penshurst Mount" and the designation of the speaker as female connect the speaker strongly with the author, I disagree with Bond's conclusion that this poem is a response to Pembroke's "Why with unkindest swiftnesse dost thou turn". Bond's conclusion is brought into

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<sup>40</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, pp. 133-134; Scholar Press facsimile, pp. 110-111.

<sup>41</sup> Wroth, *Urania I*, p. 135; Scholar Press facsimile, p. 111.

doubt by three factors, firstly – by Bond’s own admission – by Wroth’s decision to give the poem to Viscount Conway, secondly by the fact that Wroth’s poem does not respond to or match Pembroke’s in tone, but chiefly because too much weight is placed by Bond on the word ‘mount’. Within his essay Bond does address the precariousness of his designation of Wroth’s poem as a response to Pembroke’s. While he argues that Wroth’s poem was a response to her lover’s “Why with unkind swiftness” Bond acknowledges that it is not a direct answer, like Wroth’s response to Denny’s vicious verse libel, or like the witty displays of the answer poems between Pembroke and Rudyerd. Instead Bond argues that though the poem is a response to Pembroke, it was designed to be obscure, or even unrecognisable to him. ‘Wroth could hardly afford to antagonize such an influential relative even if she wanted to—and her fictionalized accounts of their relationship suggest she wished nothing of the sort.’<sup>42</sup> Bond’s own admission that the allusion to the Pembroke-Wroth relationship in this poem would have been unclear – even to its addressee – undermines the credibility of his argument that this is a form of answer poem or response to Pembroke’s accusations.

While arguing that the connection between the two poems would have been unknown to Pembroke, Bond suggests that Conway, the recipient of Wroth’s poem, in whose collection it appears uniquely titled “Penshurst Mount”, would have seen the connection, understood the manuscript to be a response to Pembroke’s poem, and therefore read it as an admission of an illicit relationship between the pair before their respective marriages. Bond himself reveals the problems with this interpretation of the title: ‘Why Wroth

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<sup>42</sup> Bond, p. 68.



would have chosen to send such an intimate poem as a gift to Conway is not at all clear.<sup>43</sup> Bond considers some possibilities but marks each as somewhat unlikely. The clear answer is that this was not an ‘intimate poem’ in the way that Bond imagines it. Clearly Wroth saw no danger in sending the poem to Conway. The existence of this manuscript reveals no clear evidence of the nature of Wroth and Pembroke’s early connection, but it does bolster evidence for the idea that Wroth’s work was desirable precisely because readers discovered the possibility of topical references in her writing. The difficulty lies in determining precisely what these topical references might be. Even in recent years scholarship on Wroth’s biography has changed drastically. Margaret Hannay discusses these changes in her contribution to *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, and furthermore, highlights the role of interpretation and creativity in a biographer’s work.<sup>44</sup> Given the context of the manuscript – that is, a gift to Viscount Conway – the idea that Wroth is communicating about an illicit relationship seems like an imposition on the text. The nature of the topical reference must remain opaque and invites multiple interpretations.

Next, I will consider the tone of the manuscript poem. Pembroke’s poem is full of aggressive accusations. Wroth’s poem does not match this tone, as it a meditative piece that combines elegiac language with the erotic. The elegiac tone is even more pronounced in the “Penshurst Mount” variant, through the inclusion of an allusion to Niobe.<sup>45</sup> The extended interaction

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<sup>43</sup> Bond, p. 72.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret P Hannay, “Sleuthing the Archives: The Life of Lady Mary Wroth”, *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson, Naomi J. Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 19-33.

<sup>45</sup> My quotations of “Penshurst Mount” are taken from Bell’s edition which places it, suggestively, side by side with Pembroke’s poem “Why with unkindest swiftness”, *Pamphilia*

with Ovid's rendering of the Niobe myth significantly changes the tone of the poem from that of the *Urania* version, thus taking it even further from the combative tone of Pembroke's poem:

Then may I live in Niobes sad state,  
Who weeping long indur'd her losses fate,  
Till to a Rocke transformd from her Tears  
She lives to feele mor drops which on her wears  
Heaven weepes on her then thys example take  
And soe I'le ty myself at Patience stake (lines 61-66).

In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Niobe boasts about the brilliance of her children and is punished by their sudden death. Her excessive pride is matched by excessive grief as she weeps until she turns to stone, and then continues to weep as a stone. Niobe's hubris, subsequent punishment and mourning provide an appropriate analogue to the speaker in this poem who is tortured by memories that once gave her delight. The idea of 'Excesse' (line 30) in suffering also provides a strong analogy with the tale of Niobe. However, the inclusion of Niobe is not just an emblem of generalised female grief, but the image of a woman mourning for the cruel loss of her children and husband. Mary Sidney includes a reference to Niobe in her *Tragedy of Antony* when Cleopatra is bemoaning the fate of her children. When Shakespeare alludes to Niobe in *Hamlet* the simile is designed to reveal the difference between Gertrude's seemingly erotic motives and what her motives ought to be, i.e.

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to *Amphilanthus* in *Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), pp. 270-273.

those of Niobe: grief for her dead husband. Hamlet blames his mother for not feeling more for her child.<sup>46</sup> While Chris Laoutaris argues that Shakespeare's reference to Niobe 'serves as a counterpoint to his visceral engagement with the "matter" of the reproductive anatomy', for early modern readers familiar with the story associated with that name, this reference is part of that 'visceral engagement'.<sup>47</sup> Far from a cold or intellectual image of classical maternity, in Ovid's popular account of Niobe in *Metamorphoses* the focus on the maternal body is – quite literally – visceral. Following a catalogue of Niobe's body parts that have turned to stone, Ovid comes to Niobe's insides: 'intra quoque viscera saxum est.'<sup>48</sup> Golding translates this as 'And into stone her very womb and bowels also bind.'<sup>49</sup> This translation of 'viscera' as 'womb and bowels' communicates the compound meanings of the word 'viscera' which could indicate the bowel – importantly an organ associated with emotion – or internal organs more generally in the lower abdomen, the womb in particular, or even offspring. In this context the word is highly evocative of Niobe's fecund womb. A reference to Niobe brings the physicality of motherhood and loss to the fore. Through her reference to Niobe, Wroth evokes a personal and feminine experience of loss. The reference also introduces the possibility that the poem might be about

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<sup>46</sup> For a discussion of this image see A. D. Cousins, "Hamlet and *Of Truth*: Humanism and the Disingenuous Soliloquy", *Shakespeare and the Soliloquy in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. by A. D. Cousins, Daniel Derrin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 96.

<sup>47</sup> Chris Laoutaris, *Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception in Early Modern England* (Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p. 77.

<sup>48</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses, Volume I: Books 1-8*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller, revised by G. P. Goold, Loeb Classical Library 42 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), Book VI.309, p. 308.

<sup>49</sup> Arthur Golding, *Ovid's Metamorphoses*, trans. by Arthur Golding (London: Penguin Books, 2002), p. 186.

Wroth's loss of her husband and child.<sup>50</sup> Given the inconclusive nature of biographical readings, this interpretation can no more be proved than Bond's. However, I present it here as an alternative. In the following paragraphs I will argue that the "Penshurst Mount" manuscript variant of Wroth's poem can be read as a moment of mourning as well as erotic remembrance.<sup>51</sup>

Wroth's use of Ovid here conforms to the method of *heuristic* imitation that I have described in Chapter 2. Wroth makes a reference to her Ovidian source material in a manner that demonstrates her specific knowledge of the text and its aptness to the situation, and then goes on to alter or divert from this authority to make a new point. First, I will show how Wroth's engagement with *Metamorphoses* is textual, and goes beyond merely the name Niobe, then I will go on to show how Wroth diverges from this material. While the comparison to Niobe does not come until line 61 of the poem, Wroth's speaker begins comparing herself to this mythological figure much earlier in the poem. In line 10 Wroth attributes her loss to 'chang' (which I argue later in this section must be viewed as an allegorical figure similar to Fortune or Mutability) and notes that the changes of fortune 'more then Plagues destroy'. The comparison is a testament to the destructive power of change: plagues destroy many, change destroys many more. However, this comparison is more specific than that. Niobe's children are killed by Apollo's arrows which are associated with plague.<sup>52</sup> Wroth creates a

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<sup>50</sup> For Niobe's loss, see Ovid, VI.301-303, pp. 308-309; for a timeline of Wroth's life, see Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2010), pp. xxvii-xxxi; for Wroth's good relationship with her husband, see Hannay, 2015, pp. 26-29

<sup>51</sup> Wroth's son James from her marriage to Robert Wroth died two years after birth.

<sup>52</sup> In the Trojan War Apollo's arrows brought plague on the Greeks when Agamemnon dishonoured his priest. Apollo is the god of plague as well as medicine.

contrast between Niobe's dramatic loss (caused by the divine retribution of Apollo) and the speaker's comparatively quotidian misfortune. Change is presented as simultaneously both underwhelming and unspeakably sinister: it is a far more destructive force than even the Olympian god Apollo, and particularly cruel due to the lack of moment afforded its victims.

Wroth also creates a parallel between her speaker and Niobe through the speaker's hubris and happiness. The speaker is 'punisht' (41) for 'glory[ing]' in her 'perfect guift' (38), and this punishment is presented as equivalent to her former happiness suggesting the equivalence of hubris and nemesis. While Wroth does not present herself in the same condemnatory terms that Ovid presents Niobe's boastful excess, she does suggest that her former happiness was too great for her deserving (lines 43-44). Like Niobe the speaker presents herself as possessing a complete certainty in the security of her state of happiness:

[...] a fayth the world cold nev'r move  
 Chaind in Affection I hopt should nott change  
 Not thincking Earth had left a Place to range (lines 54-56).

The speaker's 'fayth' denies the innate mutability of the world, both in the seasons and in the change between day and night (a form of mutability that is evident in this poem, see line 26).<sup>53</sup> The speaker's former 'fayth' also denied the idea that the earth could move, and that it can has come to a shocking realisation. The debate concerning whether the earth was inert or circling the

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<sup>53</sup> For a discussion of mutability in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, see Chapter 4 of this thesis.

sun was very much contemporary in Wroth's lifetime. While Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus* had been printed in 1543, the idea of a moving earth was not widely discussed in England until Thomas Digges' essay *A Perfit Description of the Caelestiall Orbes* was published in 1576.<sup>54</sup> Wroth and her contemporaries undoubtedly engaged in this debate.<sup>55</sup> The Penshurst library catalogue lists four editions of Copernicus' *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* dating from 1543-1617 and also includes numerous works by mathematicians Thomas Digges and his father Leonard Digges, who further explored Copernicus' theories.<sup>56</sup> Here the shock of the Copernican Revolution becomes a powerful metaphor for the effect of this change of circumstance on the speaker. The use of 'fayth' with its religious connotations implies the strength of the speaker's former belief and her sense of certainty in the world's inertia and her state of happiness. The speaker's denial of the change in the world indicates a denial of the changeable nature of fortune. This sense of certainty in her continued good fortune also makes Ovid's Niobe an appropriate analogue for the speaker. Ovid emphasises Niobe's excessive confidence in her good fortune:

sum felix (quis enim neget hoc?) felixque manebo

(hoc quoque quis dubitet?): tutam me copia fecit.

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<sup>54</sup> Peter D. Usher, *Shakespeare and the Dawn of Modern Science* (New York: Cambria Press, 2010), pp. 12-25.

<sup>55</sup> Wroth's contemporary Donne also engaged with discussion of the new astronomy in his poetry. Catherine Gimelli Martin argues that while Donne shows an awareness of the new astronomy, his poetry shows a hostile attitude to Copernicanism, preferring a geo-centric model: Martin, "Milton's and Donne's Stargazing Lovers, Sex, and the New Astronomy", *SEL*, 54 (2014), pp. 143-171.

<sup>56</sup> A presence in this catalogue does not prove Wroth's knowledge of the text but makes it highly likely that the texts were accessible to her at Penshurst: see "C" and "D", *The Library of the Sidneys of Penshurst Place circa 1665*, ed. by Germaine Warkentin, Joseph L. Black, and William R. Bowen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), pp. 141, 127.

maior sum quam cui possit Fortuna nocere,  
multaque ut eripiat, multo mihi plura relinquet.  
excessere metum mea iam bona.<sup>57</sup>

Right happy am I. Who can this deny? And shall so still  
Continue. Who doth doubt of that? Abundance hath and will  
Preserve me. I am greater than the froward Fortune may  
Impeach me. For although she should pull many things away,  
Yet should she leave me many more. My state is out of fear.<sup>58</sup>

Ovid emphasises Niobe's excessive confidence through the repetition of 'felix [...] felixque'. Golding renders the word as 'happy', but the word indicates not only joyfulness but being both fortunate and fruit-bearing, or fertile. Niobe's insistence on the permanence of something so changeable as good fortune is ominous, and the implicit (as well as the later explicit) reference to her offspring in her boast indicates exactly what she will lose. Her direct challenge to the power of 'Fortuna' in line 195 fully reveals her hubris. The rhetorical questions in lines 193 and 194 invite their contradiction that will come later in the story. Ovid's phrase 'tutam me copia fecit' (my plenty makes me safe) is a chilling echo of Narcissus' words earlier in *Metamorphoses*: 'inopem me copia fecit' ('the very abundance of my riches beggars me' or in Golding's translation: 'my plenty makes me poor').<sup>59</sup> Niobe's confidence in her happiness is mirrored in that of the speaker of

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<sup>57</sup> Ovid, VI.193-197, pp. 300-302.

<sup>58</sup> Golding, p. 182.

<sup>59</sup> Ovid, III.466, pp. 156-157; Golding, p. 110.

“Penshurst Mount”. Whether Wroth’s speaker’s confidence can be characterised as arrogant depends on her position on Copernicus’ theory. If Wroth felt that Copernicus’ model of the universe was well evidenced and a proven fact then her speaker’s insistence on the world’s inertia might be characteristic of arrogance. If, however, Wroth doubted Copernicus’ model or found it difficult to accept then the speaker’s position becomes more sympathetic. Either way the transformation of the speaker’s world view is presented as profound.

The Niobe reference also informs Wroth’s choice of the title “Penshurst Mount”. Rather than an allusion to Pembroke’s poem, Wroth is alluding to Ovid’s. The final similarity that Wroth creates between her speaker and the figure of Niobe is her location:

flet tamen et validi circumdata turbine venti  
in patriam rapta est: ibi fixa cacumine montis  
liquitur, et lacrimas etiam nunc marmora manant.<sup>60</sup>

But yet she wept and, being hoist by force of whirling wind,  
Was carried into Phrygie. There upon a mountain’s top  
She weepeth still in stone; from stone the dreary tears do drop.<sup>61</sup>

As she grieves for her children Niobe is transported to her homeland (or more specifically fatherland, ‘in patriam rapta est’) where she mourns on a mountain (‘montis’). Through the title “Penshurst Mount” Wroth also – as

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<sup>60</sup> Ovid, VI.310-312, p. 308.

<sup>61</sup> Golding, p. 186.



well as creating an identification between the speaker and herself – depicts herself on a ‘mount[ain]’ in her fatherland or her father’s land. This moment in Ovid’s text also described the transformation from which Wroth chooses to make a subtle diversion. Ovid’s Niobe is transformed into a stone on a mountain in her fatherland, and the stone miraculously still weeps, but in Wroth’s account of Niobe, she ‘lives to feele mor drops which on her wears / Heaven weepes on her’ (lines 59-60). Rather than producing more water herself, this stone is rained on; rather than weeping, she is wept on by heaven. That Niobe ‘feel[s]’ these drops and they ‘wear[...]’ on her, indicate these are more troubles. The image suggests Niobe is a piteous sight, mourned by ‘heaven’ but also further tormented by heaven. Here the grandiosity of Ovid’s tale is reduced: Wroth’s version of Niobe is more mundane – a rock in the rain – and it is more realistic. The simile moves from the fancifulness of *Metamorphoses* to depict the speaker experiencing the more quotidian troubles that are heaped upon the grief of her loss. The realism and sense of attrition in this image makes it all the more poignant.

The inclusion of the image of Niobe prompts a reconsideration of what, up to this point in the poem, might have been read as a piece about erotic remembrance and becomes one that is also about a woman grieving a lost husband and child.<sup>62</sup> The ambivalent opening address to Solitariness is clarified by Wroth’s inclusion of the Niobe reference in this variant:

Sweete solitarines joy to those hartes

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<sup>62</sup> Imagery of birth, pregnancy, and miscarriage is also explored in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. See Naomi Miller, *Changing the Subject: Mary Wroth and Figurations of Gender in Early Modern England* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), pp. 84-87; Emma Clarke, “Metaphors of motherhood: claiming back the female body in the poems of Mary Sidney and Mary Wroth”, *Women’s Writing*, 8:2 (2001), pp. 263-273.

That feele the pleasure of brave Cupids darts,  
 Grudge mee not though a Vassall to hys might  
 And a Poor subject to curst changings spite  
 To rest in you, or rather restles move  
 In your contents to sorrow for my love. (lines 1-6)

The speaker asks Solitariness for leave 'To rest in you' despite the fact that she is not one of 'those hartes / That feele the pleasure of brave Cupids darts'. The speaker is not, or does not possess, one of 'those hartes' but is nonetheless 'a Vassal to hys might'. In the context of its 1621 *Urania* incarnation the line suggests that the speaker, Dorolindus, feels rather pain than pleasure in Cupid's arrows; however, in "Penshurst Mount" the meaning of this line is transformed. Although the speaker respects Cupid she does not come to this solitary space suffering from erotic love. Her 'love' (line 6) is of a different nature, as we learn later in the poem, it is her love for those she has lost. The speaker is not only 'a Vassal' to Cupid, but also 'a Poor subject to curst changings spite'. This presentation alongside Cupid suggests that 'changing' is also a personification, a figure who is 'curst' and in possession of 'spite'. This figure Changing functions in the poem like a personification of changeable Fortune.<sup>63</sup> When the word 'change' appears in the final line of the poem its context – again alongside love – suggests it is this Fortune-like personified figure. Bell glosses the word 'change' as 'changefulness, inconstancy' thus designating it a word concerned with erotic betrayal;

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<sup>63</sup> The figure could also be likened to Spenser's Mutabilitie: see "Mutability", *The Spenser Encyclopedia*, ed. by A.C. Hamilton and W.W. Barker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), pp. 484-485.

however, the personification of this Fortune-like figure suggests otherwise.<sup>64</sup> Here the word 'change' represents the mutability of fortune. The speaker's circumstances have changed and brought her to misfortune, and Wroth's use of 'contents' implies a bitter pun. The word not only denotes those things found within solitariness, but also implies a bitter pun on the 'content[ment]' found by those aforementioned 'hartes' who experience 'joy' and pleasure in solitude and love, contrasting with the speaker's own discontent. In the same way her 'restles' movement contrasts with the 'rest' she cannot achieve. The following four lines reveal the nature of the speaker's misfortune:

A love though living lives as dead to mee  
As Jewells which in richest boxes bee  
Plac'd in a Chest that our'throwes my joye  
Shutt up in chang, which mor then Plagues destroy (lines 7-10).

When Dorolindus is the speaker of 'A love which living' (as it appears in *Urania* 1621) the word 'love' denotes a person, i.e. a beloved who is living, but is as if dead to him. However, without the frame of Dorolindus' story, this 'love' can as easily be interpreted as a feeling – that is, despite the death of the beloved, the feeling of love still lives. The notion that the speaker will 'live in Niobe's state' (line 61) supports this second reading. The speaker's 'love' lives, but the macabre images that follow, evoking coffins and death, indicate that this living love is for a dead object. The 'Jewells [...] in richest boxes / Plac'd in a Chest' evoke the body placed inside a coffin. The 'Jewells' evoke

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<sup>64</sup> For Bell's note, see Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, p. 273.

something small, very personal, and deeply treasured. The layers of interiority here – the jewels in the box, inside the chest – perhaps also evoke the internment of the coffin. The 1621 version: ‘holy reliques which in boxes bee / Plac’d’ is far less personal. The image employed in the printed version conventionally emphasises the beloved’s chastity.

In “Penshurst Mount” the speaker goes on to ask Solitariness to act as a ‘surgeon’ and cure ‘thys Curst Corsive’ – that is the memories ‘eating’ away at the speaker (lines 12-13). The address then shifts to ‘Memory’ (14) or ‘Froward Remembrance’ (21) who tortures the speaker with unbidden memories of a happier time. The conceit works in the context of both erotic lyric and elegy. The memories are tied to this particular place, designated by the title as “Penshurst Mount”:

Why doe you tell mee in thys very Place  
Of Earths best blessings, I have seene the face  
But maskt from mee I only see the shade  
Of that which once my brightest sunshine made. (Lines 23-26)

This place was a significant one for the speaker and the lost figure. Due to the location of Penshurst, Bond and others have argued that this locates the narrative of the poem in a period before Wroth’s marriage when her initial relationship with Pembroke is supposed to have taken place.<sup>65</sup> However, it must also be noted that Wroth’s association with Penshurst did not end at

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<sup>65</sup> Many critics have argued that the *de praesenti* marriage between Pamphilia and Amphilanthus in the manuscript continuation of *Urania* is a representation of events that took place between Wroth and Herbert before her marriage to Robert Wroth in 1604; see Bond, pp. 55-52.

her marriage and she is recorded as returning to her family home both during her married life and after her husband's death. Naomi Miller has shown Wroth's pattern of returning to Penshurst for her mother's support in times of crisis, specifically in the case of miscarriage.<sup>66</sup> Due to the female-dominated nature of childbirth and early years childcare in early modern England and the close relationship Wroth enjoyed with her mother, it is very likely that Wroth would have returned to Penshurst for help and advice while caring for her new baby, as a widow after her husband's death, and again after the death of her child in infancy. To its recipient, Conway, the title "Penshurst Mount" would have strongly indicated the return of a widow to her father's house. In the context of the loss of a husband and child, the imagery of 'sunshine' and 'shade', which seems rather conventional Petrarchan imagery in the 1621 version, is transformed into a poignant image of bereavement. While the beloved's face or eyes are often likened to the sun, and therefore their absence is communicated as shade and darkness, in the context of death the imagery has extra resonance. Line 25 'I only see the shade' momentarily creates the image of a ghost or spectre before the complete syntactical unit is resolved in the following line as 'shade' puns on both the shelter created by the trees on Penshurst Mount – and on the idea that there is nothing else there for her to see, the absence of the sun-like lost figure, and a ghost or spectre.<sup>67</sup> The poem is interesting in the way it transforms Petrarchan language and tropes to communicate the personal grief and loss.

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<sup>66</sup> Miller, *Changing the Subject*, p. 79.

<sup>67</sup> For examples of shade as ghost or spectre in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier usage, see "shade, n." *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2019), Web. 3 April 2019.

The appearance of Wroth's poem as part of the 1621 printed edition is clearly contrived not to invite any connection with Wroth, Pembroke, or his poem. As Bond notes, the poem is given to Dorolindus and the imagery of a crying woman (Niobe) is removed.<sup>68</sup> In this way, the poem is disconnected from any connotations of feminine grief. The story of "Penshurst Mount" is important to this thesis because it demonstrates the flexibility with which Wroth deployed her poetry. This is clear evidence that Wroth repurposed her poems in her printed work, changing them significantly from their manuscript form, and that any original intention or occasion that lead to the poem's production (be that a coterie activity, game or challenge, or a private correspondence), does not need to be brought to bear on the interpretation of the 1621 publication.<sup>69</sup>

The flexibility of these poems is also evidenced by their interaction with the musical culture of the period. Katherine Larson has gathered convincing evidence that many of Wroth's poems – like Pembroke's – were set to music, written for a specific piece of music or designed to be sung.<sup>70</sup> The relationship between music and poetry was – like much of literary culture in early modern England – an interactive and discursive one.<sup>71</sup> Pairing a poem with a well-known piece of music could create a new meaning to that poem. Performance also added an interpretive element. For example, in the manuscript continuation of *Urania* Pamphilia sings one of

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<sup>68</sup> Bond, p. 70.

<sup>69</sup> For changes in context and the journey to print resulting in changes in meaning, see Marotti, *Manuscript and Print*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>70</sup> Katherine R. Larson, "Voicing the Lyric: The Songs of Mary Wroth", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson, Naomi J. Miller (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 123-124.

<sup>71</sup> David Lindley, "Music and Poetry", *A New Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture, Volume 2*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 264-277.

Amphilanthus' poems – which, intriguingly, is one of Pembroke's poems – but through her performance Pamphilia changes the meaning of Amphilanthus' poem. In the poem "Had I loved but at that rate" the speaker asserts that his beloved is not capable of reciprocating the strength of his love because she is a woman. When Pamphilia performs, the 'I' becomes female, therefore challenging the gender assumptions inherent in the piece.<sup>72</sup> Another example of poetic and musical interaction is George Herbert's "A Parody" which uses the first line of Pembroke's "Soul's joy when I am gone", and – as Rosamund Tuve has shown – the same tune.<sup>73</sup> Music not only added another layer of meaning to poetry, but also provided another means through which it could be re-interpreted and re-written. Whatever the original occasion for a poem, its new occasion or context imbued it with new meaning.

## 6.5 Verses on Reason and Love

In the previous sections of this chapter I have followed Waller and Alexander in arguing that Pembroke's poetry was the stuff of social interaction. However, I depart from Waller in arguing that Pembroke's work was therefore not designed to further his political ends. Lamb writes:

His impetus to write was no doubt quite serious, as he followed his mother, his uncles Philip and Robert, and his cousin Mary Wroth in a Sidneian family tradition that was inherently political as well as

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<sup>72</sup> Larson, "Voicing the Lyric", p. 130.

<sup>73</sup> Rosamund Tuve, "Sacred 'Parody' of Love Poetry, and Herbert", *Studies in the Renaissance*, 8 (1961), pp. 249-290; Lamb, "The Poetry of William Herbert", pp. 274-275.

literary, implicated with an interventionist Protestant politics of the Sidney-Herbert faction that Pembroke supported in the council chamber.<sup>74</sup>

In this section I will argue that the similarities between Wroth's P86 and Pembroke's stance in his debate with Rudyerd on Love and Reason bear out Lamb's suggestion and demonstrate their shared 'interventionist Protestant politics' through their strong support of the need for mixed monarchy. In this series of answer poems, written with his parliamentary ally, Benjamin Rudyerd, debating a competition between Love and Reason, Pembroke is Love's defender, while Rudyerd denigrates Love in favour of Reason. This discussion is worth examining because it shows Wroth, Pembroke, and Rudyerd engaging in coterie activity. Furthermore, in this dialogue Pembroke is seen engaging with the same questions of governance with which Wroth engages in her poetry.<sup>75</sup>

Wroth's engagement with the debate becomes evident in P86 from the *corona* of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*. I do not suggest here that the *corona* forms part of the answer poem structure, rather, that the material that provided a basis for the *corona* is likely to have been derived from work produced during coterie exercises between these three (or more) poets.

Bee from the Court of Love, and reason torne,  
For Love in Reason now doth put his trust,  
Desert and liking are together borne

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<sup>74</sup> Lamb, "The Poetry of William Herbert", p. 271.

<sup>75</sup> See Chapter 5 of this thesis.



Children of Love, and Reason, Parents just.

Reason adviser is, Love ruler must

Be of the State, which Crowne he long hath worne;

Yet so, as neither will in least mistrust

The government where no feare is of scorn.

Then reverence both their mights thus made of one,

But wantonnesse, and all those errors shun,

Which wrongers be, Impostures, and alone

Maintainers of all follies ill begunne.

Fruit of a sower, and unwholesome grownd

Unprofitably pleasing, and unsound.<sup>76</sup>

Wroth's designation of Love as 'ruler', and Reason as 'adviser' corresponds to Pembroke's presentation of Love as husband and Reason as the wife. A suggestion of marriage is also present in Wroth's poem as the pair are described as 'Parents just'. The image of a marriage in early modern lyric (and in other discourses) is often analogous to that of the relationship between the monarch and subject or between the monarch and state. In Wroth's sonnet, the advisor is clearly subject to the ruler (Pembroke takes a similar position in his answer poems with Rudyerd, which I will discuss below, in which Love is the husband and Reason the wife); however the

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<sup>76</sup> Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P86, p. 256.

position of advisor is highly valued: in the ‘Court of Love’ the government speaks in a unified voice and its power lies in a combination of the two, as Wroth’s speaker exhorts her audience to ‘reverence both their mights thus made of one’. The Court of Love is described as a place of free speech where subjects can speak to their monarch without fear of reprisal: ‘The government where no feare is of scorn’. This is a representation of an ideal court in which the monarch values his or her advisors – this is, the sort of government Protestant aristocrats opposed to absolute rule desired. The first half of the sonnet (lines 1-9) praises the ideal monarch Love. If this Love the ruler is read as a representation of James, then it is praise to which he is invited to aspire, rather than something he has already achieved.<sup>77</sup>

Wroth’s reference to the ‘Court of Love’ invites a contrast or comparison to the contemporary court, and, along with its didactic tone, the poem can easily be read as political commentary. The answer poems of Pembroke and Rudyard engage in the same political debate, though less obviously than in Wroth’s P86 as the competitive mode of answer poetry creates a more discursive and less polemical tone. Rudyard’s speaker plays the role of a cynic who despises love in favour of reason, while Pembroke’s poems defend love as the superior of the two. Their debate about the relative merits of love and reason first introduces the language of governance in Rudyard’s first poem (the second in the sequence, “No praise it is that him who Python slew”). Rudyard argues that love changes people for the worse, making them effeminate and servile, that love is also underhand, and that

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<sup>77</sup> For this sort of instructional praise in the work of Ben Jonson see Martin Butler, “Ben Jonson and the Limits of Courtly Panegyric”, *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe, Peter Lake (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1994), pp. 91-115.

any ‘rule’ love has is ‘usurp[ed]’: ‘And fit it is, the rule which he hath got / From Reason by a base usurping plot,’ (lines 33-34).<sup>78</sup> In the same poem he later characterises reason as ‘king’ (line 85), while love is a ‘strange, strong disease’ (line 95).<sup>79</sup> Pembroke’s rejoinder comes in the next poem (“It is enough a master you grant Love”, fourth in the sequence) in which he presents Love as ruler and Reason as the subject:

Nor plots he to dissolve by feigned delight,  
Over the senses, Reason’s sovereign right;  
But Reason, finding Love to rule more fit,  
She doth that government to him commit.  
And so, ’twixt these there is no factious strife;  
Love here the husband is, Reason the wife (lines 27-32).<sup>80</sup>

As in Wroth’s poem Love is an ideal monarch who rules through the consent of his subject. The relationship between this monarch and his subject is presented as that between a ‘husband’ and a ‘wife’ – a common analogy for the relationship between a sovereign and a subject.<sup>81</sup> This idealised relationship void of ‘factious strife’ can be likened to the relationship between Love and Reason in Wroth’s P86 in which, as we have seen, a mutually beneficial, marriage-like arrangement combines the powers of the two to create ‘government’ free from ‘scorn’. Though defending Love, Pembroke’s emphasis is on the power of the subject. Pembroke places Reason in the

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<sup>78</sup> Pembroke, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup> Pembroke, pp. 8-9.

<sup>80</sup> Pembroke, pp. 10-11.

<sup>81</sup> For the wife as allegory for the subject, see Chapter 5.

feminised, weaker position of the subject and ‘wife’ yet it is Reason who has found ‘Love to rule more fit’ and it is reason who ‘commit[s]’ government to Love. Love’s sovereignty is gifted by his subject. Rather than negating it, Pembroke acknowledges and employs Rudyard’s praise of Reason to whom he designates sway over the ‘senses’ as a ‘sovereign right’. As in Wroth’s poem P86 the form of government presented values its subject(s) highly and its success is the product of cooperation. This ideal is in keeping with the Sidney-Herbert alliance’s support of mixed monarchy and their belief that the aristocracy should have a part to play in government as valued advisors to the monarch. Reason, here, represents the aristocracy as subjects, but as valuable advisors by whose consent the monarch rules.

At the same time as being entertainment (potentially both in the composition and in their reception) the poems also present the listener or reader with Pembroke’s political stance. Although the poems present both sides of the argument – as is usual for answer poems – and both poets cleverly play on the other’s conceits, Rudyard’s poetry works to create a platform for Pembroke’s position. Rudyard’s side of the debate – though in my opinion the more skilful of the two – sets up conventional arguments to be refuted by his social superior. Rudyard’s final poem (“Nor will I now your wound exulcerated”) performs a sort of defeat as he ultimately acknowledges Love’s power over him.<sup>82</sup> As Lamb has argued, just as Pembroke used his sponsorship of professional poets to further his political agenda, so too his poetry was circulated not only to delight, but to persuade.<sup>83</sup> Viewing Wroth’s

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<sup>82</sup> Pembroke, pp. 20-21.

<sup>83</sup> For the political agenda behind Pembroke’s writing, see Lamb, “The Poetry of William Herbert”, p. 271.

poem side by side with Pembroke and Rudyard's answer-poems indeed reveals more about their poetry, but that is not the details of an intimate romance, but a shared political agenda.

## Conclusion

This thesis has set out to explore Wroth's engagement with a number of authorities and influences. I have examined how and why Wroth draws on Ovid and Sidney in order to present Pamphilia as an exemplary figure, and to present herself as an heir to Philip Sidney's political and literary legacy. I have argued, by identifying similarities between Wroth's work and that of Fulke Greville and Justus Lipsius, that Wroth was influenced by Neo-stoic discourses.

This thesis has maintained that Wroth presents herself as a literary authority in order to support the political aims of her family, that is, the support of English military intervention in the Low Countries. I have argued that Wroth sets herself up as an authority through evidencing her erudition and by presenting herself as a continuation of a Sidneian literary and political legacy. Wroth advances her claim to this authority through a process of heuristic imitation of Ovid and Sidney. Wroth's imitative approach to Ovid's and Sidney's texts not only demonstrates her familiarity with the original, but also highlights her own contribution and the changes she has made to her sources. Wroth's sustained intertextuality with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and its themes of continuity and change, is designed to emphasise a continuity between Philip Sidney's poetic voice and her own. Throughout *Metamorphoses*, Ovid depicts the soul remaining the same as the body changes, and in Book XV, Pythagoras explains that the soul can be inherited.<sup>1</sup> Wroth evokes this Ovidian model of change to suggest that she is –

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<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Volume II: *Books 9-15*, trans. by Frank Justus Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916), pp. 376-377.

figuratively speaking – the heir to Sidney’s soul. However, Wroth legitimises her voice not only through a connection to Sidney’s, but also through an assertion of originality, as demonstrated through her heuristic approach to her literary sources.

This thesis has also argued that Wroth sought to connect her poetic voice with the authority of the Sidneian legacy in order to invoke and advance a political agenda with which Sidney had become posthumously associated. The Sidney-Herbert alliance championed the role of the aristocracy in government, and rejected the idea of absolutist monarchy. In 1621, this group had put all of its energies behind the cause of Elizabeth of Bohemia and the support of fellow Protestants in the Low-Countries. This political cause became closely associated with the language of Neo-stoicism. In Chapter 5, I argue that Wroth’s work was influenced by contemporary Neo-stoic discourses in order to support the idea that Wroth evoked Philip Sidney in her work for these political ends.

Whilst recent scholarship has argued that more attention must be given to the understudied manuscript version of *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* that is housed in the Folger Library, this thesis has focussed on the version of the sonnet sequence printed in 1621.<sup>2</sup> The Folger Manuscript version of the sequence has, until recently, been difficult to study in detail due to the lack of a modern critical edition. Ilona Bell’s edition, published in 2017, will place future research on a new foundation. However, while further study of the Folger Manuscript is certainly desirable, this thesis considers the printed sequence because its availability to a much wider audience gave this text

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<sup>2</sup> Ilona Bell, “Introduction”, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus in Manuscript and Print*, ed. by Ilona Bell (Toronto: Iter Press, 2017), p. 18.

political implications. As a printed work, Wroth's text was available to a wider readership than it would have been when it was circulated in manuscript amongst a coterie audience. As I have argued in section 1.5, Wroth's decision to print her work allied it with the dissenting, Protestant politics of the Spenserian poets who sought to shift the focus of public discourse away from the court through print publication.<sup>3</sup>

In reading Wroth's sonnet sequence as an intervention in a contemporary political debate I have followed the work of William Kennedy, Christopher Warley, Rosalind Smith, and Madeline Bassnett.<sup>4</sup> I have expanded this scholarship by demonstrating how Wroth's allusions to Ovid are used to develop this political discourse. I believe my extended exploration of Ovidian intertextuality in Wroth's sonnets will also be of use to scholars who do not consider Wroth's work to be political. In exploring Wroth's engagement with Ovid's Latin text, I believe this thesis represents a significant development of existing scholarship which has highlighted Ovidian references in Wroth's work, but which has not, until now, considered her engagement with Ovid's text.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Michelle O'Callaghan, *The 'Shepherd's Nation': Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612-25* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), pp. 3-20.

<sup>4</sup> William Kennedy, *The Site of Petrarchism: Early Modern National Sentiment in Italy, France, and England* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Rosalind Smith, *Sonnets and the English Woman Writer, 1560-1621* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Christopher Warley, *Sonnet Sequences and Social Distinction in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 177-179; Madeline Bassnett, "The Politics of Election in Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51, 1 (2011), pp. 111-134.

<sup>5</sup> For existing scholarship on Wroth's Ovidian allusions, see Robin Farabaugh, "Ariadne, Venus, and the Labyrinth: Classical Sources and the Thread of Instruction in Mary Wroth's Works", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 96, 2 (1997), pp. 204-221; Mary B. Moore, "The Labyrinth as Style in *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Studies in English Literature*, 38, 1 (1998), pp. 109-125; Jami Ake, "Mary Wroth's Willow Poetics", *Crossing Boundaries: Issues of Cultural and Individual Identities in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Sally McKee (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), pp. 127-151; Susan Lauffer O'Hara, *The Theatricality of Mary Wroth's Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011); Clare R. Kinney, "Turn and Counterturn: Reappraising Mary Wroth's Poetic Labyrinths", *Re-Reading Mary Wroth*, ed. by Katherine R. Larson,



In examining Wroth's Latinity, this thesis contributes to a better understanding of Wroth's education. In turn, this contribution to Wroth scholarship will add to a wider picture of women's education, and of women's engagement in political debate, in this period. I believe that Ovid is only one of several Latin sources for Wroth's work, and that she also drew on the work of Virgil and Horace. Wroth's engagement with these authorities must be the subject of future research.

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Naomi J. Miller and Andrew Strycharski (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 85-102. For Ovidian allusions in *Love's Victory*, see Joyce Green Macdonald, "Ovid and Women's Pastoral in Lady Mary Wroth's *Love's Victory*", *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 51, 2 (2011), pp. 447-463. For Ovidian allusions in *Urania*, see Clare R. Kinney, "Mary Wroth Romances Ovid", *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing, Part III: The Early Stuart Period (1603-1642)*, ed. by Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 241-256. For Wroth's interaction with Ovid and Sappho, see Line Cottegnies, "The Sapphic Context of Mary Wroth's *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*", *Early Modern Women and the Poem*, ed. by Susan Wiseman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 60-76.

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